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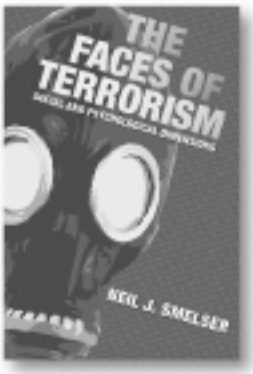

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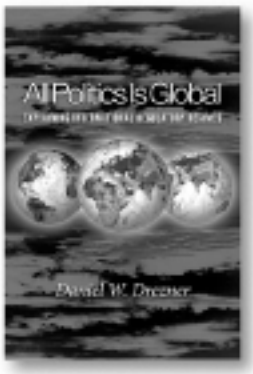

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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False Dawn

HERE WE GO AGAIN. "The coming weeks and months," explained U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in late July, "will be a crucial period in the quest for peace in Darfur." He is right. But so was the U.N. official who told a *Washington Post* reporter in July 2004—as it slowly dawned on the world that a genocide was underway in Darfur—that "[t]he next few months will be a moment of truth for Sudan." So was Kofi Annan when he declared on the *New York Times* op-ed page in April 2005, "Time is running out for the people of Sudan"—and when, 17 months later, he informed the U.N. Security Council that "the tragedy in Darfur has reached a critical moment."

For the last four years, Darfur has known only crucial periods and critical moments. Through it all, as the diplomats in New York debated, two things remained constant: The killing never stopped. And the help they spoke of never arrived.

Now another key juncture has appeared, in the form of a U.N. resolution—ratified late last month—providing for a joint United Nations–African Union force to deploy to Darfur and protect civilians. On the surface, this would seem to be a moment for optimism. The resolution would increase the number of troops patrolling Darfur from just 7,000 to 26,000; and, unlike an August 2006 resolution that also called for the deployment of U.N. troops, this one was not immediately rejected by Khartoum. What's more, on the heels of the U.N. resolution came news that representatives of various Darfuri rebel groups had managed to unite around common negotiating positions—a necessary, though not sufficient, precondition to peace talks between the insurgents and the Sudanese government.

We wish we could say these developments augured an end—finally—to the Darfur genocide. But the reality is that this crucial moment will, in all likelihood, conclude no differently from all the others. Everyone who has paid even scant attention to Darfur over the years knows that the Sudanese authorities will use every means at their disposal to slow the arrival of additional forces. Already this game has begun anew, with Khartoum seeking to complicate the international community's efforts by insisting that most peacekeepers sent to Darfur be African. Even under a best-case scenario, even in the absence of whatever new roadblocks Sudan's leaders devise, it would take many months before the international force in Darfur could possibly reach 26,000 troops.

This delay is central to Sudan's strategy. For, as the United Nations goes about the lengthy process of preparing a force—and as political negotiations between Khartoum and Darfuri rebels drag out, as they likely will given the gulf that separates the two sides—the gruesome work of genocide can go on, just as it has through all the crucial periods and critical moments of the past four years. And not only the killing and rape and destruction: In an ominous development suggesting that the genocide is now entering its final phase, reports have surfaced of Chadian Arabs crossing the border into Darfur to settle land once owned by African tribesmen. As many as 30,000 migrants, mostly Arabs, have recently arrived in Sudan from Chad. The longer peacekeepers take to deploy in substantial numbers, the more time Khartoum and its local allies have to permanently alter Darfur's demography.

Speed, then, is essential. Yet speed—as Darfuris, Bosnians, Rwandans, and Kosovars can all attest—is not exactly a strong suit of the United Nations. That is where America comes in. For there to be any chance of peace in Darfur, the United States and its allies must do what the United Nations, by its very nature, cannot: use every manner of coercion—including the credible threat of military force—to push Khartoum toward admitting peacekeepers immediately and accepting a quick and reasonable resolution to negotiations with rebels.

Is this a long shot? Absolutely. But, save for an outright NATO invasion of Darfur—an option we favor, but for which there is simply no political will at the moment—an accelerated U.N. deployment backed by American threats may be the best course available. At the very least, we must try to make it work, and soon. Because the day is fast approaching when the Africans of Darfur will be out of crucial periods and critical moments forever.

AP IMAGES/VII/GARY KNIGHT

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Off the Books

The press is agog at the pace at which presidential candidates are schnorring for cash. And, to be fair, the sums involved are terrifying: Hillary Clinton has already raised $63 million, with Barack Obama not far behind. But, while the fund-raising totals may be obscene, they are, at the very least, public knowledge. A trip to opensecrets.org will allow anyone to figure out where the candidates get their money.

Unfortunately, another more substantial fund-raising effort is underway—one that makes Clinton and Obama look like panhandlers—and this one is being conducted in utter secrecy. Early reports suggest that George W. Bush plans to raise roughly $500 million for his presidential library, which will likely be based at Southern Methodist University in Dallas and possibly include a public-policy institute. According to *The New York Daily News*, "Bush loyalists have already identified wealthy heiresses, Arab nations, and captains of industry as 'mega' donors." It's a strange wrinkle in the law: The president can raise half a billion dollars—even while he's still in office—without any obligation to disclose any of it.

Simply to find out who has donated to the ten existing presidential libraries is no easy task. In 2004, Josh Gerstein of *The New York Sun* went out to Little Rock and found a list of donors on a touch-screen computer on the third floor of President Clinton's $165 million library. That was the only way to get the names. Among those listed as "Trustees," who gave at least $1 million: the Saudi royal family and three Saudi businessmen; the deputy prime minister of Lebanon; and the governments of Dubai, Kuwait, Qatar, Brunei, and Taiwan. Foreign nationals frequently donate to presidential libraries—presumably because they are barred from giving to campaigns.

Tracking down the donors to the George W. Bush Presidential Library is even more daunting. Funds for it are apparently raised by a private charity under the care of a lawyer in Houston. (The lawyer did not return requests for comment.) It's also unknown whether the president has begun soliciting donations himself, although the historian Richard Norton Smith has noted that a president's power to raise money wanes in retirement: "On January 20, the light gets switched off." And it's not just this president: There is a decent chance that Hillary Clinton could become president in 2009, and, if wealthy donors are free to give money to her husband's library without disclosure, the opportunity for abuse becomes very real.

The history of presidential libraries is, after all, littered with dodgy contributions. In 1993, George H.W. Bush pardoned Edwin L. Cox, Jr., who had pled guilty five years earlier to bank fraud. Eleven months later, Cox's father pledged support for the Bush library and is now listed as a donor in the "$100,000 to $250,000" range. Likewise, in the late '90s, Denise Rich reportedly pledged $450,000 to Clinton's library at the same time her ex-husband, Marc Rich, was seeking a pardon for racketeering and tax-evasion charges.

JEFF MITCHELL/REUTERS/NEWSCOM

The governments of Dubai, Kuwait, Qatar, Brunei, and Taiwan have shelled out millions to fund presidential libraries that house our nation's finest kitsch.

Presidents, of course, are entitled to libraries. But there is no reason why the fund-raising process need be so secretive. The House has already passed a bill that would set clear disclosure rules for library donations. True, it wouldn't ban donations from foreign governments or even prohibit presidents from soliciting them. But, if George W. Bush (or First Spouse Bill Clinton) is sitting in the White House begging princes and ministers for money, at least we'd know about it. ◆

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"One Land for Two Peoples"

Is it a solution to the Arab/Israeli conflict or a recipe for disaster?

For decades, the declared thrust of the Palestinians has been their desire of having their own state – in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and in the Gaza Strip. Now, a new idea has taken hold and is propagated in national media: a binational state, encompassing those territories and "Israel proper." The slogan is "One Land for Two Peoples."

What are the facts?

Review of history: The Arabs have launched four major wars against Israel, at the end of which Israel remained in possession of all the lands west of the Jordan River, the undivided city of Jerusalem, the vast Sinai, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip. In what was in all likelihood a major act of folly, but in order to attain peace with Egypt, Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt. But the peace with Egypt is the coldest imaginable.

Thus, having been unable to defeat Israel in war and unable to wear it down by their "intifadas," the Arabs had to think up something new in order to destroy Israel. And they did indeed come up with something. According to the late and unlamented Yasser Arafat, the most important weapon of the Arabs is the "Arab womb," the motto being: "If we can't defeat them in war, let's outbreed them." And that is exactly what would happen if there ever were a "binational" state. There can be little doubt that, within a generation or less, the Arabs would have outbred their Jewish fellow citizens and would have become the majority in the country. They would thus have accomplished what they were unable to attain by any other means, namely the destruction of the Jewish state.

Artificial countries: With the exception of Egypt, all the countries of the Middle East are artificial creations. After World War I, England and France carved up the Ottoman Empire, with England retaining what are now Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and Iraq, and France being in possession of what are now Syria and Lebanon.

In 1917, the Balfour Declaration, proclaimed by the British mandatory power, established all of Palestine – east and west of the Jordan River – as the reconstituted homeland for the Jewish people. This was ratified by the 52 countries of the League of Nations. Insistence that these are Arab lands and that the Jews are "occupiers" is a notion that is farily new. But it has been repeated so often and for so long that most of the world has come to believe it. But it has no basis in fact at all. It is a myth.

If Israel were ever to consent to the creation of a binational state, how would it work out? To get the answer, one only needs to go next door to Lebanon. In order to provide a safe haven for the Maronite Christians, the French carved out the artificial state of Lebanon. Within just one generation, the population ratio had begun to change in favor of the Muslims. Strife broke out, which ultimately culminated in a bloody civil war that lasted for close to ten years and in which scores of thousands died. Can anybody really believe that, given the mortal hatred of the Muslims against the Jews, things would be any different in Israel/Palestine? Of course not! A bloody civil war would be the inevitable result.

> "The Palestinians, just as the over one million Arabs now living in Israel with full rights as citizens, could be part of Israel, with full autonomy and with their own internal governance…"

Created as a Jewish state: Israel was created as a Jewish state by the will of the nations of the world and by the brain and brawn of the Jewish people. There is no reason why the Israelis would turn their country over to those who are their declared mortal enemies. Do the Turks plan to establish a binational state with the Kurds (or do the Iranians or Iraqis, for that matter)? Do the Spaniards consider a binational state with the Basques? Do the Chinese propose the formation of a binational state with the Tibetans? Of course not. Why, therefore, should Israel even consider sharing its country with those whose never-changing agenda is its destruction? Why should Israel, one of the most advanced countries in the world in virtually every field of endeavor, make itself hostage to those who live in backwardness and ignorance and who are guided by religious fanaticism? Israel was founded to be the Jewish homeland and it will never acquiesce to its own destruction by allowing itself to become a binational state.

A binational state is a non-starter and, realistically, a Palestinian state in any portion of Judea/Samaria and Gaza (even in the unlikely case that the Israelis were ever willing to concede it) would not be viable. What then is the possible solution to this enduring problem? The Palestinians, just as the over one million Arabs now living in Israel with full rights as citizens, could be part of Israel, with full autonomy and with their own internal governance (something that the Kurds would give anything to attain). If they were unhappy with that solution they would be at liberty to migrate to any of the over twenty Arab countries that, one would hope, would welcome them with open arms.

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Sub-Standard

The thuggery of William Kristol.

JONATHAN CHAIT

It's hard to believe that, not so long ago, neoconservative foreign policy thinking overflowed with ideas and idealism. The descent has been steep, and nowhere is it more apparent than in the pages of *The Weekly Standard*—particularly in William Kristol's editorials, which have come to consist of stubborn denials of any bad news, diatribes about internal enemies, and harangues against the cowardice of Republican dissenters.

Kristol's sensibility is perfectly summed up in one representative passage from a recent issue. The topic was The New Republic's decision to publish an essay by Scott Beauchamp, an American soldier serving in Iraq, detailing some repugnant acts he said he and his comrades committed. Legitimate questions have been raised about this essay's veracity. (We've been publishing updates on our continuing efforts to get answers to them at tnr.com.) But Kristol rushed past these questions, immediately declaring the piece a "fiction." Offering up his interpretation of why TNR would publish such slanders, he concluded, in an editorial titled, "They Don't Really Support the Troops":

> Having turned against a war that some of them supported, the left is now turning against the troops they claim still to support. They sense that history is progressing away from them—that these soldiers, fighting courageously in a just cause, could still win the war, that they are proud of their service, and that they will be future leaders of this country.

In just two sentences, this passage provides a full summary of the decrepit intellectual state of neoconservatism. First, there is Kristol's curious premise that TNR only published this essay because we have "turned against" the war. If Beauchamp's writings were TNR's attempt to discredit the war, why would his first contribution describe a pro-American Iraqi boy savagely mutilated by insurgents? For that matter, why would we work to undermine the war by publishing a first-person account on the magazine's back page rather than taking the more straightforward step of, say, editorializing for withdrawal?

The notion that TNR published a Diarist merely for the edification of readers, rather than to advance a political agenda, did not occur to Kristol, because he could not imagine doing any such thing himself. He once explained his belief in the philosopher Leo Strauss to journalist Nina Easton thusly: "One of the main teachings is that all politics are limited and none of them is really based on the truth." Whether or to what degree Beauchamp's Diarist is true could not matter less to him.

TRB
From Washington

Two years ago, my colleague Lawrence Kaplan—who once co-authored, with Kristol, a book arguing for the war—wrote a poignant cover story describing how the dream of creating a liberal Arab state had died. Kristol, naturally, denounced his inconvenient observation. "The fact remains that it is today more possible than ever before to envision a future in which the Middle East and the Muslim world truly are transformed," he insisted. "For this, no one will deserve more credit than George W. Bush." Of course, this was an opinion, not a "fact." But the failure to distinguish between fact and opinion is typical of his mentality.

Next, there is Kristol's assumption that to concede that troops do terrible things in a war is to denounce the war as a whole. Of course, George Orwell, among many others, has written about the ways that the experience of war—and, especially, foreign occupation—can blunt moral sensibilities. It should be possible to believe this and still believe in the overall justness of a war. (Certainly Orwell himself was no pacifist.) There is an old leftist belief that, if soldiers have done horrifying things, then the war is evil. This turns out to be the *Standard*'s view as well.

Then there is Kristol's accusation that critics of the war don't "support the troops." I wonder if, back in his youthful days teaching political philosophy, Kristol ever imagined he would one day find himself mouthing knucklehead slogans like this. I shouldn't need to say this, but apparently I do: I strongly support and respect the troops and would desperately like them to succeed. My respect, unlike Kristol's, extends to soldiers who don't share my politics, and isn't contingent on the fantasy that all of them are saints.

Obviously, the way you support the troops is contingent upon your analysis of the war. If you think the war is succeeding, then supporting the war is a way of supporting the troops. If you think the war is doomed to failure, though, proposing that more troops die in vain is not a way of supporting them.

The most incredible part of Kristol's diatribe is his accusation that critics of the war *really* believe that the war is going well: "They sense that history is progressing away from them—that these soldiers, fighting courageously in a just cause, could still win the war." Now, perhaps Kristol truly believes that there is good news in Iraq hidden beneath the surface, but can he possibly believe that this good news is *so obvious* that even liberals believe it? And that liberals, including liberals who initially supported the war, are now trying to undermine it even though—nay, *because*—we believe the United States is winning?

The theme of traitorous liberals is becoming a *Standard* trope. Last week's cover depicted an American soldier seen from behind and inside a circular lens—as if caught in the sights of a hostile sniper—beneath the headline, "Does Washington have his back?" The Weimar-era German right adopted the metaphor of liberals stabbing soldiers in the back. Kristol is embracing the metaphor of liberals *shooting* soldiers in the back. I suppose this is progress, of sorts.

There was a time when neoconservatives sought to hold the moral and intellectual high ground. There was something inspiring in their vision of America as a different kind of superpower—a liberal hegemon deploying its might on behalf of subjugated peoples, rather than mere self-interest. As the Iraq war has curdled, the idealism and liberalism have drained out of the neoconservative vision. What remains is a noxious residue of bullying militarism. Kristol's arguments are merely the same pro-war arguments that have been used historically by right-wing parties throughout the world: Complexity is weakness, dissent is treason, willpower determines all.

Kristol's good standing in the Washington establishment depends on the wink-and-nod awareness that he's too smart to believe his own agitprop. Perhaps so. But, in the end, a fake thug is not much better than the real thing. ◆

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Newark Mayor Blasts the Drug War

Newark Star Ledger, June 24, 2007
by Tom Moran

For Cory Booker, it has been a sobering first year as mayor. He is an angrier man now. And the focus of that anger is a public policy that he believes is ruining his city and threatening his hopes to change it.

The problem, he says, is New Jersey's tough tactics in the drug war. The result is to turn thousands of young men into economic cripples and to give the crime wave in Newark a flood of fresh recruits. Booker describes it as almost an economic genocide against African American men in his city.

And if it doesn't change, he says, he's ready to go to jail in protest, in the tradition of the civil rights movement. "I'm going to battle on this. We're going to start doing it the gentlemanly way. And then we're going to do the civil disobedience way. Because this is absurd."

He wants to reserve prison cells for those who do violence and divert the nonviolent drug offenders into treatment programs and halfway houses. He wants to change the New Jersey laws that bar many ex-cons from getting a driver's license. He wants a black kid from Newark who sells marijuana to clear his record as easily as the white kid from the suburbs who buys it.

About 1,500 convicts are released from state prison to Newark each year, and 1,000 of them will likely be arrested again within three years mostly for drug crimes.

"The drug war is causing crime," Booker says. "It is just chewing up young black men. And it's killing Newark."

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
www.ManagingChronicPain.org www.MedicalMJ.org
www.TreatingDrugAddiction.org
www.info@csdp.org

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The Mall

Straw Man

Mitt Romney's flimsy campaign.

One of the main attractions at the annual Iowa State Fair, next to the 600-pound "butter cow" (a life-size heifer sculpted out of pure butter) and all manner of food impaled on a stick, is a man named Steve Deace. Deace is the host of "Deace in the Afternoon"—"the fastest three hours in all of local radio"—on a conservative Des Moines station called WHO. Last week, he and the other WHO announcers were broadcasting live from a glass-enclosed booth just inside the fairgrounds, putting them in close proximity to hordes of sunburned Midwesterners, as well as a steady march of presidential wannabes.

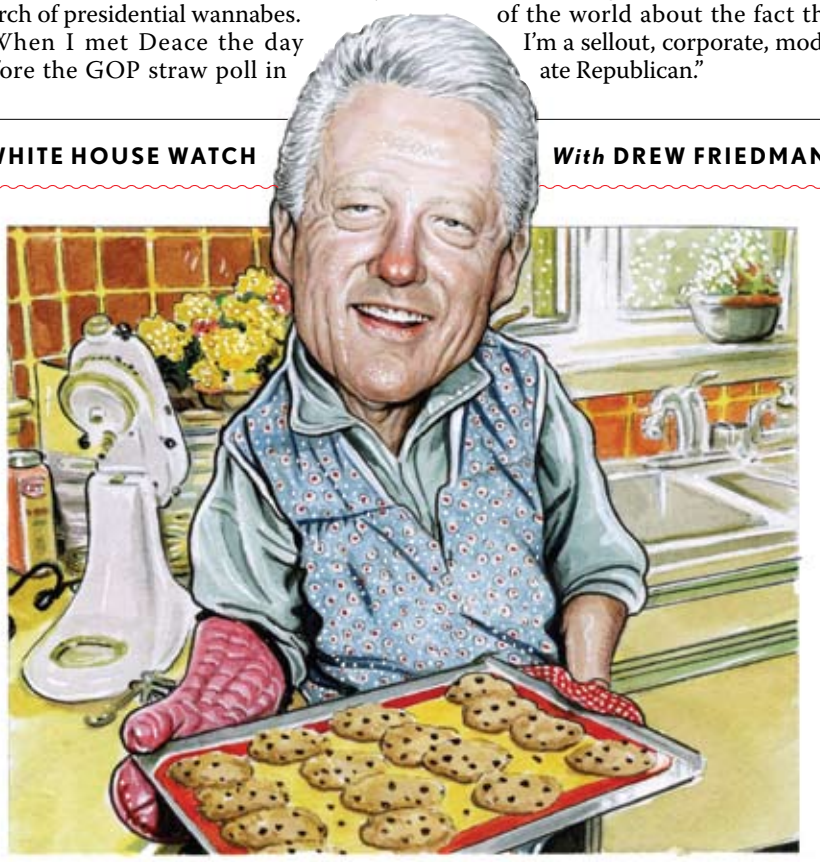
When I met Deace the day before the GOP straw poll in nearby Ames, he was eager to unburden himself about one candidate in particular: Mitt Romney. Deace had been thrashing the former Massachusetts governor for several weeks—so much so that, a few days earlier, the Romney campaign had sent an emissary to try to calm him down. Judging from our conversation, the effort had been a total failure. Deace remained convinced that Romney was only pretending to be a conservative to win the nomination. He was especially peeved at Romney's recent jab at certain "holier-than-thou" critics who had questioned his pro-life credentials. "Now, if I'm a sellout, moderate, corporate Republican, I love language like that," Deace said. "Because I'm tired of hearing from the Steve Deaces of the world about the fact that I'm a sellout, corporate, moderate Republican."

Deace is a baby-faced man of about 35, with beady eyes and pasty white skin. He has the physique of a populist folk hero—he looks to be lugging around some 250 pounds—and the fans to back up that status. Several times during his Romney monologue, he was interrupted by starstruck well-wishers—a middle-aged couple introducing their daughter, a man who urged him to run for Congress. But now, as he moved in for the kill, even the groupies couldn't divert him. "You want to know who those holier-than-thou folks are, brother? Let me tell you who they are." As he spoke, he rocked back and forth so violently I felt myself getting seasick. "Those are the folks at Priests for Life and Operation Rescue and the Right to Life Committee. ... They fought the good fight for years while Mitt was sowing his conservative wild oats somewhere in the philosophical-ethereal realm."

The news accounts trumpeting Romney's win on Saturday didn't offer much hope to people like Deace. But just beneath the headlines lay an encouraging development: Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, a bona fide conservative, had finished a respectable second. His showing was all the more impressive given that the Huckabee campaign had few organizational resources, not only compared with the Romney juggernaut, but even alongside second-tier rivals like Kansas Senator Sam Brownback and Colorado Representative Tom Tancredo. Strong organization, especially a get-out-the-vote effort, confers huge advantages in the Ames poll, to which voters must trek from all corners of the state. And yet, somehow, the Arkansan excelled nonetheless. Who knows? Maybe Deace and his fellow Romney-bashers will have a viable conservative to support after all.

There's no question that Romney earned the good press he received after Ames. In winning nearly 32 percent of the votes cast, Romney firmly established himself as the man to beat when Iowa holds the

WHITE HOUSE WATCH *With* **DREW FRIEDMAN**



The ambitious program of First Spouse Bill Clinton.

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country's first nominating contest, currently slated for next January. Moreover, with both Rudy Giuliani and John McCain skipping the straw poll, Romney won himself something else nearly as important: goodwill from the local Republican officials who value loyalty in a would-be nominee.

But despite to this impressive showing, Romney's operation sometimes gave off a Potemkin feel. Case in point: A little after nine-thirty in the morning, Romney, wife Ann, and a gaggle of staffers known as the "swarm team" trooped to the parking lot to greet an arriving bus. The first person off the coach was a stout, gray-haired woman named Joni Scotter, who shrieked the moment she laid eyes on the governor and his wife. "We're going to have such a good day!" she said, then planted herself at Romney's side as the rest of the bus filed by. It was, all in all, an impressive display. Scotter, who turned out to be Romney's Linn County chair, told me she'd packed the bus full of friends and neighbors and shipped off from Marion two hours earlier.

As the crowd dispersed, the khaki-clad candidate and his wife boarded a golf cart, which whisked them out of sight. What followed was a bit of a letdown. I watched the next 15 Romney buses roll in from all across Iowa. By my count, ten of those were no more than half full. A bus from Boone was less than a quarter full, as was another from Cherokee.

The pattern repeated itself throughout the day. For example, the Romney campaign had erected an enormous soundstage on a lush plot of grass and hired a rock band to perform on it. The scene looked like something out of the video for the Guns N' Roses song "Paradise City." But I never saw more than ten or 20 people in front of the stage at once. Most of Romney's supporters remained seated under a tent 20 yards away, seemingly indifferent to the music.

For his part, Huckabee, had no buses and only a threadbare staff. The $150,000 he'd spent leading up to Ames paled alongside Romney's millions. But he made the most of it. His soundstage had fit on the back of a modest trailer-bed when I saw it the day before. It looked as if it had been abandoned in an unused parking lot, until I realized that the parking lot was actually Huckabee's home base. (The candidates bid on locations in an auction; it turns out you get what you pay for.) By eleven o'clock on straw-poll day, the temperature was already pushing 90 and the heat seemed to bubble up from the asphalt. But a crowd of 150 to 200 people had gathered to hear old rock 'n' roll numbers. The main draw was a soulful electric guitarist named … Mike Huckabee.

Still, it wasn't until the afternoon that I realized Huckabee might be poised for a breakthrough. Shortly after one o'clock, conservative talk-show maven Laura Ingraham, our intrepid emcee, introduced each of the straw poll candidates. The crowd erupted with applause for Romney, just as you'd expect for a man who had chartered at least one bus for each of Iowa's 99 counties. Thereafter, each of the other candidates was introduced to steady applause: Tom Tancredo. John Cox. Ron Paul. (OK, John Cox received slightly less than "steady" applause, but even I had no clue who John Cox was and I was covering the event.) Finally, Ingraham got to Huckabee, at which point the crowd roared all over again.

Mike Huckabee is about as reliable as social conservatives come: He's been on the front lines of the fight against abortion and gay marriage and is unimpressed by the theory of evolution. But it's not so much his worldview that distinguishes him—Brownback can check all the same boxes—as his breezy charm. Sitting in the WHO studio the day before the straw poll, Deace and Huckabee bantered about their recent weight-loss regimens, which for Deace included drinking large amounts of water. (Deace has lost some 65 pounds in recent months.) "I do get up and pee every twenty minutes," Deace confessed. "Well, that's better than peeing every twenty minutes and not getting up," the former governor parried.

Huckabee's magnetism surely helped his cause on Saturday. The campaign distributed around 1,850 tickets and received almost 2,600 votes. (Straw poll attendees must obtain a $35 ticket in order to vote. Most campaigns buy them up and distribute them to supporters.) That's unusual for top performers at Ames, who normally distribute far more tickets than they net in votes, as was the case with both Romney and Brownback.

Huckabee seems to have exerted a strong pull on undecided voters. There were four voting sites at Ames: one on either end of a building called Scheman, one in an auditorium called Stephens, and one in the Hilton Coliseum, the main speaking venue. The voting area on the northern end of Scheman was closest to the Huckabee tent. It was also far and away the most convenient for his supporters, given that Hilton, the next closest site, was a bit of a zoo. Nonetheless, according to an unofficial tally provided by a rival campaign, Huckabee received about 60 percent of his votes in Hilton. It's not hard to imagine the undecideds listening to Huckabee's speech, then walking into the lobby and pulling the lever for him. If true, that would bode well for Huckabee's chances of denting Romney's lead.

Two things have to happen for that to come to pass. The longer-term priority is to nudge Brownback aside. The two men appeal to the same demographic and they combined to draw 33 percent of the Ames tally to Romney's 31.5. A candidate who consolidated their supporters could legitimately challenge Romney in Iowa. All the more so when you consider that many social conservatives back Romney because he seems to be the most right-wing of the top-tier candidates. Were Huckabee to look like he had a real shot at winning Iowa, he might peel off a decent number of would-be Romney voters. Of course, skeptics say the significance of the Huckabee-Brownback bloc was in-

Edel Rodriguez

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flated by the absence of McCain and Giuliani on Saturday, but that analysis seems backward. Who, after all, are McCain and Giuliani more likely to draw votes from: the moderate former governor of Massachusetts, or the devoutly pro-life former governor of Arkansas?

All this is moot for the moment, though. Brownback's chief strategist, Rob Wasinger, insists that the senator is moving full speed ahead with his campaign. And, though Brownback dumped far more money into his third-place finish than Huckabee spent on second—the campaign rented nearly 60 buses for the occasion—local Republicans have a hard time finding fault with that decision. "I don't see how a guy who finished first, second, or third can say I'm going to do anything but go all the way right now," says Jeff Lamberti, an influential Iowa Republican who recently served in the state Senate. "They're in a position to stay in until January."

That makes the shorter-term goal of capitalizing on the good showing by raising money and signing up activists all the more important for Huckabee. There is presumably only so much money available for a second-tier social conservative. If Huckabee starts to monopolize it, he could force Brownback's exit by depriving him of cash.

In the meantime, it's Mitt Romney who may be sweating a little. Around five o'clock, the ex-governor ventured outside to sign some autographs, surrounded by a scrum of "Team Romney" staffers and volunteers. The mood was generally light. One young woman performed a series of flips and cartwheels. A blond man with a beard soared several feet into the air on a kind of industrial-strength pogo stick, which Romney's nephew manufactures. But Romney himself looked sober. Several strands of hair had broken free from the right side of his head, something I hadn't previously thought possible, and he was unusually flushed. As Steve Deace might say, we're not in the "philosophical-ethereal realm" anymore.

Noam Scheiber

Turd Blossom

Karl Rove's dreams go down the toilet.

Every political reporter has a Karl Rove story, and I have mine. I met Rove in Austin in 1995, when I was writing a profile of presidential aspirant Phil Gramm. Rove had done direct mail for Gramm's campaigns for Senate, and I expected nothing but praise for the senator. Rove did praise him, but he would occasionally interject a surprisingly critical note. He said that people in Texas were "sick of being dunned for money" by Gramm. The senator, Rove said, was "one of the least flexible people I've ever met in public policy." I left the interview very proud of myself for having cleverly extracted these candid admissions from a Gramm supporter. They went directly into my profile. Several years later, I realized that Rove had known exactly what he was doing. He was already working for George W. Bush and didn't want to do anything to help a rival Texas politician.

In this incident—and in hundreds of others—Rove showed himself to be a master of political guile. But Rove has always wanted to be something more than a master manipulator; he wanted to be "the architect" (in Bush's words) of a realignment that would do for the Republican Party what the New Deal had done for the Democratic Party. As early as 1998, Rove was predicting that the 2000 election would be as important as that of 1896, after which Republicans held the White House for 28 of the next 36 years. "I look at this time as 1896, the time where we saw the rise of William McKinley and his vice president, Teddy Roosevelt. … That was the last time we had a shift in political paradigm," Rove told *The Austin American-Statesman*. He would make the same point after Republicans won House and Senate seats in 2002 and after he managed Bush's reelection in 2004. "The victory in 1896 was similarly narrow," Rove told Fox News in November 2004. "But … we only knew that it was an election that realigned American politics years afterward. And I think the same thing will be true here."

Despite the sweeping Democratic victory in the 2006 election, Rove has still not abandoned his dream. Interviewing Rove about his imminent departure from the White House, *The Wall Street Journal*'s Paul Gigot asked whether the "new GOP William McKinley–style majority he hoped to build [is] now in tatters." Rove said it was not, citing the social conservatism of the young (a dubious claim if there ever was one) and the reluctance of Americans to admit defeat in Iraq. Rove's supporters in Washington have also come to his defense. Right-wing icon Grover Norquist proclaimed that "Karl Rove changed history," that his campaign leadership would "define America for a generation." Other observers—unable to overlook last fall's GOP defeat—tempered their rhetoric but still lauded Rove's Machiavellian accomplishments. His strategy, they judged, might have failed, but no one could deny his tactical brilliance. Rove might not have been an architect, in other words, but he was a damn good carpenter. In truth, however, even this more modest appraisal gives Rove too much credit. By the end, the floors and walls of the House of Bush were crumbling, thanks largely to Rove's miscues and machinations.

Rove's greatest election success—if you leave aside Bush's first win as governor in 1994—came in 2000. In that election, Democrats had an enormous advantage: Bill Clinton was a popular president; the economy was still buoyant; Al Gore had far more credibility as a national leader than the callow Texan; and the electorate was moving away from the conservatism of the Reagan and Gingrich years toward a more centrist politics. To accommodate this new post-Reaganite electorate, Rove packaged Bush as a "compassionate conservative" who championed spending for education and condemned the Republican House for trying to eviscerate the Earned Income Tax Credit. It's now forgotten, but Bush refused to make opposition to abortion a litmus test for new judges or for his vice president. This strategy seemed to work. In the 2000 election, Bush won the independent vote—something neither his father nor Bob Dole had been able to do—and he cut into the Democratic advantage with women voters and Hispanics.

David Cowles

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Rove, of course, took credit for 2000, but he regarded the 2002 and 2004 elections as his signal achievements. He attributed his success in these elections to his abandonment of the centrist strategy of 2000 in favor of a three-pronged approach: expanding the Republican base in the "exurbs" and rural areas; using a "72-Hour Task Force" to mobilize that base on Election Day; and using discrete spending programs and so-called micro-targeting to pick off vulnerable Democratic sub-constituencies among Hispanics, African Americans, Jews, and Catholics. The strategy was based on the idea that, with demography favoring the Republicans—as voters moved to the Sunbelt and the exurbs expanded—these maneuvers would guarantee a Republican majority. And the strategy appeared to be behind the GOP successes in 2002 and 2004. In *One Party Country*, a laudatory book about Rove that appeared before the 2006 election, *Los Angeles Times* reporters Tom Hamburger and Peter Wallsten wrote that, "like a dominant sports franchise, the Republican Party has put in place a series of structural and operational advantages that give the GOP a political edge for the foreseeable future."

But what actually happened is considerably more complicated. Rove's focus on expanding the Republican base did contribute to Bush's victory in 2004, but, in both 2002 and 2004, it took second place to the effect of the September 11 attacks, which scared the hell out of the American people. As political psychologists have recently discovered—and as I explore in greater detail on p. 17—that fear made Americans more susceptible to the kind of charismatic appeal Bush could provide. It also widened and deepened the appeal of social conservatism. What Rove did was to recognize the full extent to which Bush and the Republicans could politically take advantage of this fear.

He didn't recognize it at first, though. In fact, even though Bush's popularity soared after September 11, it did not immediately translate into political gains. When the president stayed above the campaign fray in the November 2001 gubernatorial elections, the GOP lost major races in New Jersey and Virginia. It was only after that debacle that Rove and Bush decided to focus the 2002 elections on the "war on terror." As Rove explained in a January 2002 address to a Republican luncheon in Austin, "We can go to the country on this issue because they trust the Republican Party to do a better job protecting and strengthening America's military might and thereby protecting America. Americans trust the Republicans to do a better job of keeping our communities and our families safe."

In the 2002 election, Rove used the fears created by September 11 to engineer a turnaround in Republican political fortunes. In an August 2002 Gallup poll, voters had preferred Democratic House candidates by 50 to 42 percent. With the Enron scandal in the background and the economy still in recession, it looked as though Democrats could increase their margin in the Senate and take back the House. But, in September, Rove and the Bush administration began focusing on the war on terrorism—joined in the public mind at that point with the threat from Saddam Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction." In mid-October, Republican candidates charged Democrats with undermining legislation for the Department of Homeland Security; and Bush began a whistlestop tour—17 stops in 15 states in the final week before the election—warning that "we must assume the enemy is coming and that we've got to do everything to protect the homeland." This appeal resonated—and not just in exurbs and rural areas. The GOP won Senate seats in Missouri and Minnesota, for instance, because Democrats and independents in upscale suburbs voted Republican.

In 2004, Rove had a more difficult task than in 2002, because many parts of the electorate had become disenchanted with the war in Iraq and were less vulnerable to Bush's charismatic appeals. For example, college-educated women, who had favored Republican congressional candidates by 50 to 48 percent in 2002, backed Democratic congressional candidates by 54 to 44 percent in 2004. With these voters returning to the Democratic fold, Rove had to rely on voters still susceptible to a politics that claimed Iraq to be a front in the war on terrorism. With this appeal, Rove did succeed in expanding the Republican vote in the exurbs and rural areas; more importantly, he won support from constituencies that were not part of the Republican base but had been up for grabs in the past. In 2000, white working-class women preferred Bush by a margin of 7 percent. In 2004, they preferred him by 18 percent because a plurality identified terrorism and security as their most important issue rather than the economy, jobs, or the war in Iraq.

The greatest increase in Republican votes came in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Wyoming—states where Bush and Rove barely ran campaigns, but where the Republican stand on the war on terrorism had enormous appeal. Without September 11, Rove would not have had a base to expand or constituencies to target. Republicans would have been faced with an electorate that was moving to the center—just as it had begun to do in 2000—and would have had to fight for the voters in the middle. As it was, the electorate of 2004 split roughly in half, and the Republican half was sustained chiefly by the spell cast by September 11. As voters' perceptions of the war on terrorism vied with their growing awareness of the disaster in Iraq, the spell began to lift, and what Rove took to be a permanent majority began to disintegrate.

Rove, who had been able to adapt in the past to changed circumstances, did not do so in Bush's second term. He was blinded by his own theory of realignment. When Bush was reelected, Rove apparently decided that Republicans really could win simply by expanding their conservative base. Instead of attempting to move Bush back to the political center, as he had done during the 2000 general election, he convinced Bush to wager his domestic program on privatizing social security. He helped to polarize Congress and to politicize every administration department and agency. And, when Bush's popularity sagged, he tried to use the war on terrorism to revive it. In a speech in January 2006 designed to set the tone of the forthcoming campaign, Rove accused Democrats of having a "pre-9/11 worldview." But the strategy he employed in 2004 was already obsolete.

In the 2006 election, the Democrats didn't merely win back Congress (a success that Rove could conceivably have blamed on the corruption of Tom DeLay et al. and the malfeasance of Mark Foley); they won back 321 state legislative seats, indicating a far deeper resentment of the Bush administration and Republican governance. Clearly, Rove had not created the kind of majority that Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democrats had created in 1932 and 1936. At best, U.S. politics had returned to what political scientist Walter Dean Burnham called an "unstable equilibrium." At worst, it was headed toward a Democratic majority. And Karl Rove was headed back to Texas, where he can go dove-hunting with his old pal Phil Gramm.

John B. Judis

ANTHONY RUSSO

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Inside Job

The netroots miss their Stokely Carmichael moment.

What does Markos Moulitsas have against Mike Gravel? The über-blogger recently called for exiling the longshot presidential candidate from future Democratic debates. "Mike Gravel is a waste of our time," he wrote in an August 7 post. "[He's] a running joke."

That's an odd assessment coming from the founder of *Daily Kos*. Every time Gravel gets behind a lectern, he flays the Democratic Party for knuckling under to militarists and corporations. In other words, he sounds just like Markos Moulitsas. Gravel was a hero of the anti-Vietnam fight and is arguably the most radical Democrat running for president. (Dennis Kucinich comes close, but Moulitsas doesn't much like him, either.) It's understandable that Moulitsas and his Kossacks wouldn't support a quixotic candidate like the former senator from Alaska, but you'd think they would at least afford him some respect—the way Ralph Reed treated Alan Keyes in 2000. You might even think they would want him on stage, pushing the Democratic debate to the left. Instead, they mock the poor guy. In the most recent poll of *Kos* readers, he got 1 percent.

Gravel's sin? He's impractical. It's not just that he doesn't have a prayer of becoming president—it's that he doesn't seem to care. The thing that set Moulitsas off was Gravel's discussion of his national sales tax at the YearlyKos presidential debate. Moulitsas disapproves of the tax on its merits, but what really angered him was Gravel's acknowledgement that the proposal would never pass. "At least Kucinich pretends his agenda matters," he fumed. "Gravel won't even give us that courtesy."

It's no secret that Moulitsas cares more about victory than ideology. He's said it repeatedly. But it's worth pausing for a moment to recognize how remarkable this ultra-pragmatism is. As long as there has been an American left, American leftists have been arguing about their relationship to "the system." Can fundamental change come through one of the two major parties, or through the ballot box at all? Or must the system itself be overthrown through some sort of direct action?

For at least a century, this debate has been playing itself out again and again. It's Samuel Gompers versus Bill Haywood in 1905. Walter Lippmann versus John Reed in 1917. Franklin Roosevelt versus Norman Thomas in 1932. Bayard Rustin versus Stokely Carmichael in 1964. Michael Harrington versus Tom Hayden in 1968. Al Gore versus Ralph Nader in 2000. The outsiders have generally lost, but they have been a powerful force. Haywood's Industrial Workers of the World—with its call for a revolutionary general strike—enjoyed real strength in the pre–World War I American West. In 1932, 53 prominent intellectuals, including The New Republic's Edmund Wilson and Malcolm Cowley, signed a statement demanding "the establishment of a workers' and farmers' government which will usher in the Socialist Commonwealth." And by 1965, after Lyndon Johnson spurned the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and escalated the Vietnam war, much of the New Left abandoned electoral politics in favor of outright resistance.

Today, by contrast, the debate is so lopsided that it barely qualifies as a debate at all. Among the netroots, it's taken as a virtual given that the best way to fundamentally change America isn't just to work through the political system, but through one of the two major parties and, at the presidential level, through mainstream candidates. (Even in 2004, the netroots overwhelmingly favored Howard Dean—who at that point didn't want to withdraw troops from Iraq—over Kucinich, who did.) The netroots aren't infinitely flexible, of course. Had Joe Lieberman won the Democratic nomination in 2004, some might have bailed. But, by historical standards, they're at the pragmatic extreme. Perhaps no progressive movement in U.S. history has so wholly identified itself with one party and with the political system writ large. That's the movement's great strength and, potentially, its greatest weakness.

What explains the netroots' faith in the Democratic Party? First, as Jonathan Chait has noted ("The Left's New Machine," May 7, 2007), they are using the right as a model. Between 1964 and 1980, the conservative movement captured the GOP. And, since then, the divide between movement groups like the Christian Coalition and the party itself has largely disappeared, with right-wing activists taking over the party in state after state. But just because conservatives took over the GOP doesn't explain why the netroots were so confi-

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dent they could do the same in the Democratic Party. After all, although movement conservatives faced cultural barriers in overthrowing old-guard Rockefeller Republicans, they never threatened the people who paid the party's bills. Indeed, starting in the 1970s, corporate America's new hostility to government regulation meshed nicely with the concerns of the Goldwaterites and Christian conservatives then crashing the GOP's gates. The Democratic Party, by contrast, relies on big donations from people sharply at odds with the economic leanings of the netroots. (Though the netroots may be changing that by becoming a significant source of donations themselves.) After the 1990s—when Democrats became more dependent on corporate money and Bill Clinton pushed an aggressive free-trade agenda—it would have been reasonable for some on the left to argue that a progressive movement *couldn't* take over the Democratic Party in the way conservatives took over the GOP, and that the anti-corporate left needed to build a party of its own.

In fact, someone did make that argument: Ralph Nader. And herein lies another explanation for the netroots' devotion to the Democrats. There have been lots of progressive third-party candidates in U.S. history—Eugene Debs, Robert La Follette, Norman Thomas, Henry Wallace—all arguing that, even if they didn't win, they would push American politics to the left. Whether they succeeded is debatable. But, until Nader, no progressive third-party candidate had dramatically pushed American politics to the *right*—as Nader did when he helped elect George W. Bush. In the process, he discredited progressive third parties for a generation. Had Nader—once a liberal icon—showed up at YearlyKos, he probably would have been booed.

But, if Nader explains why the netroots spurn third parties, he doesn't answer the more fundamental question of why they put so much faith in the electoral process at all. Winning elections was rarely a central concern for Students for a Democratic Society or the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, never mind the gun-toting militants of the Black Panther Party. By contrast, Moulitsas and Jerome Armstrong's 2006 book, *Crashing the Gate*, is basically a primer on campaign strategy.

This metamorphosis owes itself in part to the cultural shifts of the past four decades. Postwar America was an exclusionary place that forced blacks, women, students, gays, and others to contort their identities into the narrow and often demeaning spaces permitted by the straight white men who made up the establishment. The movements of the 1960s, therefore—especially later in the decade—were as much about identity as about policy, aimed at allowing historically marginalized groups to decide for themselves how they looked, dressed, procreated, recreated, worked, and loved. And, even when these movements did seek political change, they often relied on institutions outside the electoral system. The civil rights movement operated largely through black churches and communities. In the Port Huron Statement, SDS argued that universities were a key vehicle for radical change. For the left, therefore, elections were not the only—or even the best—path to progress.

The netroots are different. Largely because of the civil rights, women's rights, and gay rights movements, today's cultural mainstream is far broader, and the activists who attend YearlyKos fit in fine. The netroots may consist of political outsiders, but, unlike their progressive predecessors, they are not cultural ones. When Moulitsas talks about crashing the gate, he's not talking about social acceptance; he's talking about political power.

If the netroots work through the Democratic Party because they have political rather than cultural goals, they also do so because there aren't many other options. In today's America, few powerful institutions outside the electoral system are pushing for progressive change. The universities are politically quiet. Some union leaders want to make labor a national protest movement (and the netroots want that too), but, after decades of decline, it isn't—at least not yet. Black activism has also moved firmly inside the political system. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton—who are part politicians, part agitators—increasingly look like transitional figures, as activist ministers give way to black mayors and members of Congress who campaign and govern rather than protest. Perhaps the closest thing to a robust political movement outside today's two-party system is the campaign for immigrants' rights—organized through unions, ethnic organizations, and churches—which showed flashes of power earlier this year. But, while the civil rights and antiwar movements split the Democratic Party 40 years ago, labor's decision to abandon its historic fear of immigration means that immigrant activism and partisan activism can probably go hand in hand. The netroots doesn't have to choose.

Finally, there's one last—deeper—explanation for the netroots' pragmatism. It's the first broad-based liberal movement to emerge since communism's demise. In the Progressive era, it was conventional wisdom on the American left—asserted by everyone from Eugene Debs to John Dewey—that socialism was historically inevitable. Then, during the Depression—until Stalin's alliance with Hitler and the news of his terrible crimes brought most leftists to their senses—the Soviet Union became a real-life model of what revolution, as opposed to mere reform, could achieve. Even in the '60s, the shift towards outright resistance coincided with an enthusiasm for revolutions abroad. In Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Frantz Fanon, Mao Zedong, and Ho Chi Minh, the New Left saw blueprints for the revolution it desired at home. Tom Hayden and Staughton Lynd visited Hanoi, and Stokely Carmichael moved to West Africa, where he took the name Kwame Toure in honor of the leaders who had brought independence to Ghana and Guinea. "For generations," writes Todd Gitlin in his excellent book *The Sixties*, "the American left has externalized good: we needed to tie our fates to someone, somewhere in the world, who was seizing the chances for a humane society."

Now that's impossible. Sean Penn can embrace Hugo Chávez and Michael Moore may swoon over Cuban health care, but such radical camaraderie pales in comparison even to that of the Reagan years, when every major campus boasted a branch of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, which championed El Salvador's Marxist FMLN. The Soviet Union is gone, and, virtually without exception, leftist revolutions in the third world have ended in tears. (Nelson Mandela, perhaps the only recent foreign leader to enjoy demigod status on the American left, underscores the point. Post-apartheid South Africa may be anti-American, but it is more capitalist than it was under white rule.) Even the social democracies of Western Europe don't shine as brightly as they did a few decades ago. With the cold war's end, there is simply no compelling ideological alternative beyond America's shores.

On the right, this has produced a utopian spasm: a belief that communism's

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demise proves capitalism's perfection, vindicating its purest, most deregulated form. But, on the left, it has made revolutionary rhetoric sound absurd. The netroots feel the American system has gone fundamentally wrong; that, in some profound ways, it has become less just, less decent, less free. And yet, the American system is all they have. It can be reformed, turned into a better version of itself. But it can't be overthrown because there is nothing with which to replace it. Markos Moulitsas is an idealist in a post-utopian age.

On balance, that's a very good thing. Revolutionary leftism has usually turned ugly. And the netroots' pragmatism—their willingness to sully themselves with the compromise that electoral politics inevitably entails, their preference for achieving results rather than just bearing witness—could make them a formidable force for change. There is, however, a danger. The sophisticated argument for outside agitation, for staking out an extreme position and refusing to budge, has always been that it empowers the pragmatists. It lets reformers tell people in power that, if they don't make reforms, all hell will break loose. In that way, Haywood empowered Gompers. Thomas empowered FDR. And Carmichael empowered Bayard Rustin and Martin Luther King. The sophisticated argument against pure pragmatism is that, without an unpragmatic alternative, it doesn't work.

If Democrats take power, the absence of such an alternative in a post-Marxist, post-Nader age may prove the netroots' Achilles heel. What if Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama doesn't fully withdraw from Iraq, or push hard for universal health care? What is the liberal blogosphere's implied threat? What is the institutional—or even ideological—basis for threatening to leave the Democratic mainstream, or the political game altogether, and join the threatening hordes outside? One day in the not-too-distant future, Markos Moulitsas may realize that Mike Gravel isn't such a waste of time after all. PETER BEINART

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A graveyard of Israeli armored vehicles is one of the featured attractions in Hezbollah's new war museum.

Exhibition Game

Hezbollah's creepy new museum.

BEIRUT, LEBANON

EARLIER THIS WEEK, I found myself standing in the courtyard of Beirut's newest museum in front of the warped propeller of a Yasur CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopter. The propeller, a placard helpfully explained, had been "destroyed by the resistance" during last summer's war, a fate that had also befallen the half-dozen charred Israeli military vehicles surrounding it. A group of hijab-clad women nudged me out of the way so they could snap some photos with the propeller.

The downed helicopter is on display at the Spider's Web, Hezbollah's new war museum. The free exhibition commemorates the group's "divine victory" over Israel last summer by offering up a professional and slickly curated collection of war paraphernalia—the work of over two dozen conceptual artists, graphic designers, engineers, musicians, and lighting technicians. Since opening last month, it has become this summer's hottest tourist destination, attracting, mostly by word of mouth, over 200,000 visitors. "We don't even remember the war in the Christian area where I'm from, but I felt like it is something that should not be forgotten soon," explains Danya, a 26-year-old Christian financial consultant, as she made her way into the museum past a busload of schoolchildren. "Also, I wanted to see what all my friends were talking about."

And that's exactly Hezbollah's intention. The militant group has struggled to maintain its wartime popularity since it withdrew from the government last fall, occupied downtown Beirut, and threw the country into political turmoil. The Lebanese government has condemned Hezbollah, claiming it dragged the country into war. It has also refused to mark the war's anniversary this month. The Spider's Web, by contrast, won't let the Lebanese forget it.

ENTERING THE MUSEUM, visitors are greeted by massive posters of the war's most reviled villains. A menacing picture of Condoleezza Rice announces that "This war is part of birth bangs [sic] of the new middle east [sic]," while a jester-like George W. Bush assures viewers that "[o]ur nation is wasting no time in helping the people of Lebanon." Former Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz, in Israel's crowning moment of the war, gazes pensively through capped binoculars. "Hassan Nasrallah won't forget the name Aameer Peretz [sic]," quotes the caption under his larger-than-life portrait.

The main hall is lined with a panorama of crisp, glossy photographs: scenes of the bombed-out Al Manar building (Hezbollah's TV station); floor-to-ceiling portraits of Lebanese refugees bawling in front of their leveled homes; a couple taking their wedding pictures in the rubble of south Beirut. One of the installations contains photos of bloody Lebanese children and infants covered in bandages and IV tubing, all surrounding a teddy bear recovered from a bombed-out Lebanese house. Lest anyone fail to realize who could possibly be so bloodthirsty, another display—which includes pictures of Israeli children ex-

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It's a bird! It's a plane!
Actually, it's an Israeli drone captured by Hezbollah.

citedly signing missiles and a Hasidic man pumping his fist in front of an Israeli tank—proclaims, "This is their culture, this is their belief."

The museum simultaneously tries to portray Hezbollah as helpless victims and brave warriors. The Spider's Web draws its name from a Nasrallah speech in which he boasted that Israel is "more feeble than a spider's web"—a theme he reiterated in a speech to tens of thousands of screaming fans outside the museum this week. Throughout the exhibition, glass cases sunk into the ground display some of the Israeli spoils captured by Hezbollah: helmets, boots, machine guns, radios, oxygen tanks, and even personal items such as iPods and tefillin (Jewish prayer straps) looted from dead Israeli soldiers. "Watch it burn," proclaims a poster of a capsized Israeli warship. "It will sink taking with it dozens of Zionist Israeli soldiers."

Perhaps fearing that the deaths of just dozens of Zionists won't make enough of an impression, the Spider's Web design team has made sure that pictures of bloodied and limbless Israeli soldiers make up the largest part of the exhibit. Some are digitally altered to be surrounded by hellish flames; others are rendered with anguished faces into art deco portraits; still others are engulfed in spider webs constructed with Koranic verses. "The invincible army!" gloats one of these montages. "It's Lebanon, you fools," reads another. A Warhol-esque portrait of Nasrallah presides contentedly over the display.

The museum's main event is a sound-and-light show around Hezbollah's prized artifact—a Merkava tank bombed during the war—displayed in a recreated bomb crater lined with mannequins of (what else?) dead Israeli soldiers. Every few minutes, the lights dim for an effects-laden video extravaganza that shows the explosion of the tank, up-close shots of Hezbollah militants launching Katyusha rockets, and Hezbollah's missiles raining down on the Israeli city of Haifa. After the show, the lights come up on posters of crying Israeli soldiers.

Following this grand finale, visitors are quickly ushered out of the museum to a grassy, serene "Martyr's Oasis." This installation is filled with white pillars and a white staircase leading up to a white doorframe, perhaps a subtle nod to the glorious fate in store for those who died fighting for Hezbollah last summer (and whose pictures line the streets surrounding the museum).

The museum's visitors, however, are relegated to worldly pleasures for the time being: The Hezbollah gift shop is located conveniently near the exit of the museum. For sale are fashionable Hezbollah hats, DVDs of Nasrallah's speeches, and Hezbollah's latest video game, "Special Force 2: Tale of the Truthful Pledge"—available in Arabic, English, French, and Farsi.

ZVIKA KRIEGER

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No Account

The nefarious bureaucrat who's helping banks rip you off.

IN THE LATE 1990S, Minnesota customers of Fleet Bank began to notice some unusual additions to their mortgage bills. They took their complaints to the state attorney general's office, which discovered that the bank had been selling customers' account information to telemarketers. The marketers would then charge people's mortgage accounts for such things as pre-paid legal services they had never agreed to purchase. Fleet was intimately involved in the scheme, right down to approving the marketing scripts, and it netted nearly $10 million nationally from it. In 2000, the Minnesota attorney general sued Fleet Mortgage Corporation for fraud and deceptive practices.

As the unsavory details of Fleet's behavior started to leak out, the financial giant brought an unusual ally to the legal battle: Julie Williams, then–chief counsel of the federal Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC). Created in 1863 by the National Bank Act, the OCC regulates big national banks, protecting depositors from unstable institutions. Historically, the OCC has confined its role to quietly deploying armies of eye-shaded examiners to scrutinize bank ledgers to head off problems. But, in the Fleet case, the OCC aggressively intervened in a very public dogfight—and not on behalf of bank customers. Rather, Williams's office asked a federal judge to throw out Minnesota's lawsuit against Fleet. In an amicus brief, Williams argued that the state had no authority over the operating subsidiaries of national banks and that only the OCC and other federal banking agencies could enforce consumer protection laws against those institutions. In a rare loss for Williams, the court disagreed, and Fleet ended up refunding money to thousands of consumers.

But Williams's actions in the case have been part of a disturbing trend. Over the past decade, state officials who have tried to rein in some of the more egregious practices of the nation's banks—passing laws banning ATM surcharges or cracking down on predatory mortgage lending—have found themselves facing off with Williams. In court, she has successfully asserted that states have no right to enforce their own consumer protection laws against national banks or their subsidiaries, particularly those

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laws involving predatory lending, which has been a major factor in the more than 1 million home foreclosures last year. "What's disgraceful is for a federal agency to spend all these resources preventing consumer protection activities," says Prentiss Cox, a former assistant attorney general who tangled with Williams in the Fleet case. "It makes it look like their clients are the banks and not the customers or the public."

Although Williams's tenure at the OCC predates President Bush, her legal philosophy fits squarely with the administration's unprecedented use of federal agencies to preempt state laws when those laws have threatened corporate profits. Her quiet activism also has created a legacy that's likely to survive any major changes at the White House. In April, Williams's string of anti-consumer court victories culminated in a major U.S. Supreme Court decision. The ruling in *Watters* v. *Wachovia* effectively prevents states from ever bringing another lawsuit like the one against Fleet in Minnesota. The result is an environment where trillion-dollar financial institutions are free to abuse consumers with little fear that anyone will hold them accountable for it—especially not the OCC.

One of the most chilling moments in the recent documentary on consumer debt, "Maxed Out," comes when filmmaker James Scurlock interviews two women whose children hanged themselves after running up steep credit card bills while in college. In a devastating bit of editing, "Maxed Out" juxtaposes scenes of the grieving mothers with clips of a poised, soft-spoken Julie Williams in a bright striped sweater explaining to members of Congress why it's OK for banks to push credit cards on college kids with no income.

At first blush, Williams seems an unlikely proponent of this pro-business ideology. She is a graduate of the first class of Antioch Law School, a leftie law school founded in D.C. in 1972 by a former speechwriter for Robert Kennedy. After graduation, Williams went to work at Fried Frank, the law firm co-founded by Kennedy in-law Sargent Shriver. While she practiced corporate finance law there, much of Williams's career has been in government, including a stretch at the Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS), the federal regulator involved in cleaning up the savings and loan meltdown. By the time she arrived at the OCC in 1993, Williams apparently believed that national banks needed to be freed from complying with nettlesome and inconsistent state laws.

Since Williams's arrival, the OCC has used litigation to do just that. According to an informal survey by Kathleen Keest, of the Center for Responsible Lending, and Elizabeth Renuart, from the National Consumer Law Center, between 1982 and 1992, the OCC filed only four amicus briefs in litigation involving national banks. But, during Williams's tenure as chief counsel, between 1994 and July 2006, the agency filed 60 amicus briefs, at least 58 of which were in support of banks.

When I reached Williams at her office recently, she said that there's an easy explanation for the uptick: In 1994, Congress gave the OCC independent litigating authority. Previously, the Justice Department handled such legal work for the agency, she said. Yet other federal banking regulators, such as the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the OTS, also won litigating authority that year but haven't been nearly as aggressive as the OCC in helping banks they regulate fend off legal challenges from consumers.

As like-minded Bush appointees joined the agency after 2000, the OCC stepped up its attacks on state attorneys general. In 2005, Williams was temporarily serving as acting comptroller of the currency. Under her leadership, the OCC successfully sued New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer to prevent him from simply investigating racially discriminatory lending practices of several national banks operating in New York.

And, in recent years, when states have attempted to enforce their own consumer protection laws against companies that had financing relationships with big banks—including car dealerships, an unlicensed trade school, and an air-conditioning company—they've run up against Williams and the OCC, telling them to back off. "The universe of players who now think they can ignore state law is vastly expanded," says Keest.

After declaring itself the only sheriff in town, the OCC has shown little interest in doing the consumer protection work it has forced the states to abandon. "It's like the FBI taking the case from some local prosecutors, which is OK, except that you can't just take the case and then throw the file in the trash," says Matt Lee, a banking activist and head of the nonprofit Fair Finance Watch.

The OCC has done nothing, for instance, to prevent banks from selling customers' account information to marketing companies, as in the Fleet case. It has few resources devoted solely to helping consumers. In response to a 2005 Freedom of Information Act request, the OCC reported that its "customer assistance group" employed a grand total of three people whose job primarily involved investigating and resolving consumer complaints. By comparison, according to a fact sheet from the House Financial Services Committee, state banking agencies and attorney generals' offices employ nearly 700 full-time examiners and attorneys who make sure that consumer laws are enforced. In 2003 alone, state bank agencies brought 4,035 consumer enforcement actions. Since 2000, the OCC has brought just 11 consumer enforcement actions. The biggest two involved cases that were initiated and investigated by state attorneys general and that the OCC initially tried to prevent from going forward.

Williams argues that her agency is very active protecting consumers. It just doesn't tell anyone about it. "It's not public. We don't do press releases," she says. In effect, she says, the public just has to trust her. *Stephanie Mencimer*

Stephanie Mencimer is the author of Blocking the Courthouse Door: How the Republican Party and its Corporate Allies Are Taking Away Your Right to Sue.

Randall Enos

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Death Grip

How political psychology explains Bush's ghastly success.

JOHN B. JUDIS

In June 2004, I went door to door in a white, working-class neighborhood of Martinsburg, West Virginia, a small blue-collar town in decline. There, I found voters disillusioned with both the Iraq war and the flagging economy. But, when I returned five months later—the Sunday before the election—I had difficulty digging up anyone who didn't plan to vote for George W. Bush. As far as I could tell, Martinsburg voters were backing him for two reasons: first, because he opposed gay marriage and abortion ("There are two gays around the corner who are voting for Kerry," one fellow, with a Bush sign in his yard, advised me scornfully from his stoop); and, second, because he was leading the war on terrorism ("I feel more safe with Bush in there," an elderly disabled man explained). There was still grumbling over the war, the economy, and other topics—the same elderly man who praised Bush for making him feel safe also bemoaned America's lack of universal health insurance—but these issues were eclipsed by the threat of gay weddings and terrorist attacks.

Bush carried West Virginia and won the election partly because he ran a better campaign than John Kerry. But that wasn't the only reason. There was something odd about the support for Bush in places like West Virginia. Unlike voters in New York City, voters in Martinsburg had little to fear from terrorist attacks; yet they backed Bush, while New Yorkers voted for Kerry. If gay marriage were legalized, Martinsburg would be unlikely to host massive numbers of same-sex weddings; yet voters I talked to were haunted by the specter of gay marriage.

Some pundits have tried to explain away this mystery by arguing that Bush backers voted for their values rather than their interests. But this explanation is unsatisfying, since many of those voters didn't opt for "family values" in 1992 and 1996, when the country elected a well-known philanderer as president.

In fact, many political scientists can't begin to explain what took place in West Virginia in 2004. In recent years, the field has become dominated by rational choice theorists, who have tried to develop complex mathematical equations to predict voting behavior. These equations rest on a view of voters as calculating consumers choosing a product on the basis of relative cost and utility—a view that generally leaves little room for the possibility of voters acting irrationally.

There is, however, one group of scholars—members of the relatively new field of political psychology—who are trying to explain voter preferences that can't be easily quantified. The best general introduction to this field is Drew Westen's recent book, *The Political Brain*, but the research that is perhaps most relevant to the 2004 election has been conducted by psychologists Sheldon Solomon, Jeff Greenberg, and Tom Pyszczynski. In the early 1980s, they developed what they clumsily called "terror management theory." Their idea was not about how to clear the subways in the event of an attack, but about how people cope with the terrifying and potentially paralyzing realization that, as human beings, we are destined to die. Their experiments showed that the mere thought of one's mortality can trigger a range of emotions—from disdain for other races, religions, and nations, to a preference for charismatic over pragmatic leaders, to a heightened attraction to traditional mores. Initially, the three scholars didn't attempt to apply their theory to elections. But, after September 11, they conducted experiments designed to do exactly that. What they found sheds new light on the role that fear of death plays in contemporary politics—and, arguably, goes a long way toward unraveling the mystery of Martinsburg.

Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski met as graduate students at the University of Kansas in the late '70s. (Today, they are professors at Skidmore College, the University of Arizona, and the University of Colorado, respectively.) In 1980, Solomon discovered the work of Ernest Becker, an anthropologist whose last book, *The Denial of Death*, had won the Pulitzer Prize in 1974. Becker was part of a generation of American social psychologists—stretching from David Riesman, who wrote *The Lonely Crowd* in 1950, to Christopher Lasch, who penned *The Culture of Narcissism* in 1979—who operated outside the academic discipline of psychology and were far more influenced by Freud and Marx than by B.F. Skinner and John B. Watson. Riesman, Lasch, and company are no longer avidly read—partly because of the fascination with neuroscience, but also because today's students and academics don't appear as interested in fundamental questions about life, death, love, and history.

Becker, who died of colon cancer in 1974 at the age of 49, had a checkered academic career, largely because his work failed to fit within academic departments. Although a riveting lecturer—he filled the 700-seat Wheeler Hall auditorium in Berkeley for a class on Marx and Rousseau—he bounced from school to school on short-term contracts. In 1967, Michael Lerner (later of *Tikkun*) and I helped organize a demonstration on the Sproul Hall steps to demand that Berkeley's anthropology department hire Becker permanently, but to no avail. Two years later, Becker finally found a home at Simon Fraser University outside Vancouver, where he wrote what turned out to be his most influential books.

In *The Denial of Death*, Becker tried to explain how fear of one's own demise lies at the center of human endeavor. "Man's anxiety," Becker wrote, "results from the human paradox that man is an animal who is conscious of his animal limitation." Becker described how human beings defend themselves against this fundamental anxiety by constructing cultures that promise symbolic or literal immortality to those who live up to established standards. Among other things, we practice religions that promise immortality; produce children and works of art that we hope will outlive us; seek to submerge our own individuality in a larger, enduring community of race or nation; and look to heroic leaders not only to fend off death, but to endow us with the courage to defy it.

TODD SLATER

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We also react with hostility toward individuals and rival cultures that threaten to undermine the integrity of our own.

Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski first presented a summary of Becker's ideas at the Society for Experimental Social Psychology in 1984. As they talked, the three later wrote, "well-known psychologists jostled each other vigorously to escape." Afterwards, they submitted their take on Becker to *The American Psychologist* and were peremptorily turned down. "I have no doubt that these ideas are of absolutely no interest to any psychologist, alive or dead," the journal's reviewer replied. Later, the journal's editor told the three psychologists that, if they wanted to be taken seriously in their profession, they would have to find ways to test their ideas experimentally. And that's what they proceeded to do.

Their first experiment was published in 1989. To test the hypothesis that recognition of mortality evokes "worldview defense"—their term for the range of emotions, from intolerance to religiosity to a preference for law and order, that they believe thoughts of death can trigger—they assembled 22 Tucson municipal court judges. They told the judges they wanted to test the relationship between personality traits and bail decisions, but, for one group, they inserted in the middle of the personality questionnaire two exercises meant to evoke awareness of their mortality. One asked the judges to "briefly describe the emotions that the thought of your own death arouses in you"; the other required them to "jot down, as specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you physically as you die and once you are physically dead." They then asked the judges to set bail in the hypothetical case of a prostitute whom the prosecutor claimed was a flight risk. The judges who did the mortality exercises set an average bail of $455. The control group that did not do the exercises set it at an average of $50. The psychologists knew they were onto something.

Over the next decade, the three performed similar experiments to illustrate how awareness of death could provoke worldview defense. They showed that what they now called "mortality salience" affected people's view of other races, religions, and nations. When they had students at a Christian college evaluate essays by what they were told were a Christian and a Jewish author, the group that did the mortality exercises expressed a far more negative view of the essay by the Jewish author than the control group did. (German psychologists would find a similar reaction among German subjects toward Turks.) They also conducted numerous experiments to show that mortality exercises evoked patriotic responses. The subjects who did the exercises took a far more negative view of an essay critical of the United States than the control group did and also expressed greater veneration for cultural icons like the flag. The three even devised an experiment to show that, after doing the mortality exercises, conservatives took a much harsher view of liberals, and vice versa.

In conducting these experiments, they took care not to tell the subjects what they were doing. They also devised experiments to answer obvious objections to their theory. For instance, they substituted other exercises designed to increase anxiety—by reminding subjects of an upcoming examination or a painful dental visit—to determine if these thoughts had the same effect as the mortality exercises, but they didn't. It wasn't anxiety per se that triggered worldview defense; it was anxiety specifically about one's own death.

Drawing on psychoanalysis, but looking for experimental verification, Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski developed a theory to explain how mortality salience works. When they started conducting experiments, the psychologists had believed that the sheer recognition of one's mortality directly triggered worldview defense. But, when other psychologists, varying the procedure, failed to reproduce the same results, they discovered an important caveat: When they would ask subjects to make judgments immediately following the mortality exercises, the exercises would have little effect. It was only when they interspersed a diversionary interval between the exercises and the judgments that the exercises had their full impact.

Freud had distinguished between "primary processes" of thought that were unconscious and irrational and "secondary processes" that were conscious and rational. Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski reasoned that, when individuals first feel anxiety about their mortality, they respond consciously by invoking the usual psychological defenses—for instance, telling themselves that "it's not me, now." That allayed conscious anxiety, but, after the conscious anxiety about mortality had subsided, the thought remained unconscious and active and led people to erect worldview defenses. "The implicit knowledge of death rather than the current focal awareness is the motivating factor," they wrote. "Once the problem of death is out of focal attention but while it is still highly accessible, terror management concerns are addressed by . . . bolstering faith in the worldview."

To demonstrate this effect, Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski devised experiments using subliminal cues. They asked subjects to evaluate whether two words on a computer screen were related. One group of subjects had the word "death" flashed subliminally between the two words, while another group had the word "field" flashed. Afterward, neither group said they saw more than two words at a time. But, by using word-fragment completion tests—for instance, is "coff_ _" completed as "coffin" or "coffee"?—the psychologists were able to establish that the group which had "death" flashed before them, but not the control group, was unconsciously thinking about death. The psychologists then asked the groups to evaluate essays critical and supportive of the United States. Those who had "death" flashed before them had a much more negative view of the essay critical of the United States than those who had seen the word "field." They exhibited the same pattern of judgment as those who had done the mortality exercises but, unlike them, did not need an interval before making judgments. The psychologists still lacked a full explanation of how this worked, but they had shown that, in their words, "worldview defense in response to thoughts of death does not require any conscious awareness of such thoughts." Indeed, it worked best when these thoughts were unconscious.

By the end of the 1990s, Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski had made their reputation among social psychologists. Psychologists around the world—particularly in Germany, the Netherlands, and Israel—were using their theories to devise experiments of their own. In October 2001, the American Psychological Association asked the three to write a book on how their theories could explain Americans' reaction to September 11.

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In the Wake of 9/11, which appeared in 2003, recounted more than a decade of experiments and speculated on how the public's reaction to the attack—including heightened religiosity, patriotism, and support for both Bush and his evangelical swagger—could be explained as worldview defense.

The three scholars also began devising experiments to test this theory. The first of these explored whether reminders of September 11 functioned as mortality reminders. In the spring of 2002, the psychologists, along with five colleagues, conducted an experiment at the University of Missouri, where subjects had either "911," "WTC" (for the World Trade Center), or "573" (the area code for Columbia) flashed subliminally between word associations. Afterward, they completed word-fragment tests to see whether thoughts of death were stirring in their unconscious. The psychologists found the same pattern between "911" and "WTC," on the one hand, and "573," on the other, that they had earlier found between "death" and "field." They concluded that reminders of September 11 awakened unconscious mortality thoughts. Later experiments would further confirm this.

They then explored whether Bush's popularity in the years after September 11 stemmed in part from Americans' need for a charismatic figure who could help them overcome these thoughts. Bush's appeal, the psychologists speculated, lay "in his image as a protective shield against death, armed with high-tech weaponry, patriotic rhetoric, and the resolute invocation of doing God's will to 'rid the world of evil.'" In 2002, the psychologists, aided by two colleagues, conducted an experiment at Brooklyn College that showed that mortality reminders dramatically enhanced the appeal of a hypothetical candidate who told voters, "You are not just an ordinary citizen: You are part of a special state and a special nation."

Next, they began testing Bush's appeal directly. In October 2003, the three scholars, together with five colleagues, assembled 97 undergraduates at Rutgers to participate in what the students thought was a study of the relationship between personality and politics. One group was given the mortality exercises. The other wasn't. They then read an essay expressing a "highly favorable opinion of the measures taken by President Bush with regards to 9/11 and the Iraqi conflict." It read, in part:

> Personally I endorse the actions of President Bush and the members of his administration who have taken bold action in Iraq. I appreciate our President's wisdom regarding the need to remove Saddam Hussein from power and his Homeland Security Policy is a source of great comfort to me. … We need to stand behind our President and not be distracted by citizens who are less than patriotic. Ever since the attack on our country on September 11, 2001, Mr. Bush has been a source of strength and inspiration to us all.

This was not the kind of statement that would appeal to most Rutgers undergraduates, and indeed, on average, members of the control group rated it unfavorably. But those who did the mortality exercises on balance favored the statement. In February 2004, the psychologists repeated the experiment, but this time they used September 11 cues. They had one group of students write down the emotions that September 11 aroused in them and describe what happened on that day. They got the same results as before: On average, those in the September 11 group approved of the statement, while those who didn't do the exercises disapproved. Based on political questionnaires they had the students fill out, they also found that the September 11 and mortality exercises "increased both conservatives' and liberals' liking for Bush."

Then, in late September 2004, the psychologists, along with two colleagues from Rutgers, tested whether mortality exercises influenced whom voters would support in the upcoming presidential election. They conducted the study among 131 Rutgers undergraduates who said they were registered and planned to vote in November. The control group that completed a personality survey, but did not do the mortality exercises, predictably favored Kerry by four to one. But the students who did the mortality exercises favored Bush by more than two to one. This strongly suggested that Bush's popularity was sustained by mortality reminders. The psychologists concluded in a paper published after the election that the government terror warnings, the release of Osama bin Laden's video on October 29, and the Bush campaign's reiteration of the terrorist threat (Cheney on election eve: "If we make the wrong choice, then the danger is that we'll get hit again") were integral to Bush's victory over Kerry. "From a terror management perspective," they wrote, "the United States' electorate was exposed to a wide-ranging multidimensional mortality salience induction."

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THE NEW REPUBLIC ONLINE

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In their experiments, Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski make a good case that mortality reminders from September 11 enhanced Bush's popularity through November 2004. But, on the basis of their research, it is possible to draw even broader conclusions about U.S. politics after September 11. Mortality reminders not only enhanced the appeal of Bush's political style but also deepened and broadened the appeal of the conservative social positions that Republicans had been running on.

For instance, because worldview defense increases hostility toward other races, religions, nations, and political systems, it helps explain the rage toward France and Germany that erupted prior to the Iraq war, as well as the recent spike in hostility toward illegal immigrants. Also central to worldview defense is the protection of tradition against social experimentation, of community values against individual prerogatives—as was evident in the Tucson experiment with the judges—and of religious dictates against secular norms. For many conservatives, this means opposition to abortion and gay marriage. This may well explain why family values became more salient in 2004—a year in which voters were supposed to be unusually focused on foreign policy—than it had been from 1992 through 2000. Indeed, from 2001 to 2004, polls show an increase in opposition to abortion and gay marriage, along with a growing religiosity. According to Gallup, the percentage of voters who believed abortion should be "illegal in all circumstances" rose from 17 percent in 2000 to 20 percent in 2002 and would still be at 19 percent in 2004. Even church attendance by *atheists*, according to one poll, increased from 3 to 10 percent from August to November 2001.

In the months after September 11, most Americans were caught up in the same reaction to the tragedy—and that included adulation for Bush, even among many Democrats. But over the next few years, faced with two elections, Bush had to maintain his popularity; and he did so by constantly reviving memories of that dark day. As the 2002 election approached, voters turned their attention to the recession, as well as Enron and other scandals—all to the Democrats' favor. At that point, Bush, who had stood aside in the November 2001 gubernatorial elections that Democrats won, sought to base the 2002 election on terrorism. Bush and Karl Rove used the full arsenal of scare tactics to evoke fears of another September 11. The result was that the electorate became sharply polarized between conservatives and liberals and between Republicans and Democrats, while those caught in the middle tended to side with the Republicans—exactly as the psychologists' experiments might have predicted.

Some political analysts harshly criticized Kerry in 2004 for failing to counter Bush's charismatic style with an equally attractive appeal of his own. Many, like *Slate*'s Chris Suellentrop, complained that Kerry lacked vision. "Vision without details beats details without vision," Suellentrop wrote. Others, like Thomas Frank, wrote that Kerry should have countered Bush's "cultural populism" with "genuine economic populism." But, if Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski are right, it would have been very difficult for any politician—not just the stolid Kerry—to overcome Bush's built-in advantage from being the nation's leader at a time when many voters feared another attack. In 2004, Bush, as the commander-in-chief, still had the unconscious on his side. And that advantage may have proven insuperable.

Soon after the 2004 election, the mood in the country began to shift. Reminders of September 11 lingered, but they were increasingly displaced by worries over the Iraq war and anger over the growing scandals within the Bush administration and the Republican Congress. Bush's incompetence in responding to Katrina tarnished his image as a father-protector. Says Solomon, "Bush became less of a useful object to unload non-conscious anxieties about death."

One explanation for what happened psychologically can be drawn from experiments that Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski conducted in the mid-'90s. These showed that there were conditions under which the mortality exercises had a reduced impact. One such situation occurred when the experimenter repeatedly told the subjects to make a "careful" response to the questions rather than a "gut-level" or "natural" or "first" response. In those cases where the experimenter urged care and deliberation, the psychologists concluded, subjects acted on a "rational" basis that reduced the influence of unconscious anxieties.

Something like that might have happened after the 2004 election, as voters, forced to weigh other concerns—Iraq, Katrina, the Abramoff scandals—subjected reminders of September 11 to greater thought and skepticism. These associations made Bush "less of a useful object." It could also be that active memories of September 11 have begun to fade for many Americans—just as memories of Pearl Harbor did for an earlier generation—reducing the effect that these memories have on unconscious fears. The reduction of mortality salience is evident not just in growing public dissatisfaction with Bush, but in reduced support for conservative social causes. The average annual percentage of those believing abortion should be illegal dropped from 19 percent in 2004 to 15 percent in 2006, and the percentage believing it should be legal "under any circumstances" rose from 24 to 30 percent. The post–September 11 outburst of religiosity also began to abate, particularly among the young. These changes in public sentiment, which reflected the diminished psychological impact of September 11, help explain the Democratic triumph of 2006.

Of course, there are still voters within the Republican electorate whose hearts beat to the rhythms of September 11 and who are still engaged in a passionate defense of their worldview. They continue to identify the war in Iraq with the war on terror; they worry about illegal aliens and terrorists crossing the border; some even judge the growing public opposition to Bush as further confirmation of his role as protector. These voters appear particularly attracted to Rudy Giuliani, whose entire campaign is based upon reminding voters of September 11. And, if Giuliani is the Republican nominee in 2008, the election may pivot on his ability to use reminders of September 11 to provoke the public into another massive bout of worldview defense.

But, right now, it doesn't look promising for any candidate who hopes to follow Bush's 2004 script. The voters of 2008, including those in Martinsburg, will probably be buffeted by competing emotions about Iraq and the war on terrorism, and therefore less inclined to base their decisions on gay marriage. Barring another assault on American soil, the moment of September 11—and the reminder of mortality that it brought—may well have passed. And with it, too, the ascendancy of politicians who exploited the fear of death that lies within us all. ◆

ANTHONY RUSSO

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The Iconoclasts

Evangelicals turn toward … the Orthodox Church?

JASON ZENGERLE

The ministry is a calling, but it is also a career, and, in 1987, a Baptist minister named Wilbur Ellsworth was given the career opportunity of a lifetime. After nearly two decades of pastoring modest congregations in California and Ohio, Ellsworth, at the age of 43, was called to lead the First Baptist Church of Wheaton, Illinois—one of the most prominent evangelical churches in what was then the most prominent evangelical city in the world. Often called the "Evangelical Vatican," the leafy Chicago suburb is home to Wheaton College—the prestigious evangelical college whose most famous graduate is Billy Graham—and a host of influential evangelical figures, a number of whom worshipped at First Baptist. "I was now preaching to these people every Sunday," Ellsworth recalls. "It was all sort of heady and exciting."

From a professional standpoint, Ellsworth thrived. He oversaw the construction of a majestic new building for First Baptist with a 600-seat sanctuary and a 100-foot steeple that towered over Wheaton's Main Street. And, due to the prominent evangelicals he now ministered to, he became something of a prominent evangelical himself—routinely meeting with the many evangelical leaders who constantly came through Wheaton. "I was at the very center of the religious world that I'd been a part of for most of my life," he says. "It was quite a promotion from where I was before."

From a spiritual perspective, however, Ellsworth was suffering. Over the past 20 years, a growing number of evangelical churches have joined what is called the "church growth movement," which favors a more contemporary, market-driven style of worship—with rock 'n' roll "praise songs" supplanting traditional hymns and dramatic sketches replacing preachy sermons—in the hope of attracting new members and turning churches into megachurches. First Baptist of Wheaton was not immune to this trend: Ellsworth increasingly found himself fighting with congregants about the way worship was being done. "They wanted to replace our organ with a drum set and do similar things that boiled down not to doctrine, but to personal preference," he explains. "I said, 'That's not going to happen as long as I'm here.'" It didn't. In 2000, after 13 years as the pastor of First Baptist, Ellsworth was forced out.

For Ellsworth, his departure from First Baptist triggered both a professional and a spiritual crisis. But, before he could deal with the former, he felt he had to address the latter. He devoted himself to reading theology and church history. At first, he seemed headed in the direction of the Calvinist-influenced Reformed Baptist Church or the Anglican Church, which are where evangelicals in search of a more classical Christian style of worship often end up. But, as Ellsworth continued in his own personal search, his readings and discussions began taking him further and further past the Reformation and ever deeper into church history. And, gradually, much to his surprise, he found himself growing increasingly interested in a church he once knew virtually nothing about: the Orthodox Church. "I really thought he'd go to Canterbury," says Alan Jacobs, a Wheaton College English professor and Anglican who is friendly with Ellsworth. "But he took a sudden right turn and wound up in Constantinople."

Ellsworth began reading more and more about Orthodox Christianity—eventually spending close to $10,000 on Orthodox books. By 2005, he was regularly visiting an Antiochian Orthodox Church in Chicago (the Antiochian Orthodox Church is Middle Eastern in background and the seat of its patriarchate is in Damascus). By late 2006, Ellsworth realized that he wanted to be Orthodox himself. On the first Sunday of the following February, an Orthodox priest in Chicago anointed him with holy oil and he was chrismated—or formally received—into the Orthodox Church. A month later, at the age of 62, he was ordained as an Orthodox priest himself.

Ellsworth's story is hardly unique. Most of the approximately 150 members of the Orthodox parish he now leads are former evangelicals themselves. Even Ellsworth's transition from evangelical minister to Orthodox priest is not uncommon. Of the more than 250 parishes of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, some 60 percent are led by convert priests, most of whom are from evangelical backgrounds. And, according to Bradley Nassif, a professor at North Park University and the leading academic expert on Evangelical-Orthodox dialogue, the Antiochian Archdiocese has seen over 150 percent church growth in the last 20 years, approximately 75 percent of which is attributable to converts.

While it's unlikely that the Orthodox Church—which, according to the best estimate, has only 1.2 million American members—will ever pose any sort of existential threat to evangelical Christianity in the United States, it is significant nonetheless that a growing number of Southern Baptists and Presbyterians and Assemblies of God members have left the evangelical fold, turning to a religion that is not only not American, but not even Western. Their flight signals a growing dissatisfaction among some evangelicals with the state of their churches and their complicated relationship with the modern world.

One evening in June, I went to see Wilbur Ellsworth at his new professional and spiritual home—the Holy Transfiguration Antiochian Orthodox Church in Warrenville, Illinois. Although it is one town over from Wheaton and just a few miles from First Baptist, Holy Transfiguration is located a great psychic distance from the "Evangelical Vatican." The church itself is tucked away in a shabby residential neighborhood, set among working-class bungalows and across the street from a Veteran of Foreign Wars (VFW) post, and it is housed in a modest one-story building with peeling white paint. It was a Saturday evening when I first visited, and Ellsworth—or, as he's now called, Father Wilbur—was at the church to lead a vespers service. He was robed in gold-trimmed vestments, but with his open, clean-shaven face, he bore little resemblance to the stern—to say nothing of hirsute—Orthodox priests of popular imagination.

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Greeting me outside Holy Transfiguration, Ellsworth was gracious, but also a bit anxious. As 30 or so worshipers filed into the church, he cast occasional glances across the street, where a few presumably unchurched people were making a ruckus on the VFW baseball field as they drank beer and shagged fly balls. Standing in the diminishing evening light, he apologized for what he said was an unusually small turnout, which he attributed to the pleasant weather. "If they don't come," he said, "I'll remind them who made it so nice." He also apologized for the church's appearance, telling me that in a few weeks its exterior would be repainted. As we prepared to head inside, he introduced me to his wife, Jean, who, he explained, would sit with me through the service in case I had any questions. It was the first time in all of my journalistic visits to churches—including the time I went to an all-night service at a charismatic church of African immigrants who spoke in tongues—that a minister felt compelled to provide me with a chaperone. More than anything, Ellsworth seemed worried that I'd find his church weird.

This is an understandable fear. For a long time, the Orthodox Church simply wasn't on the radar of most Americans—never mind evangelicals. Although Orthodox Christianity has been in North America since 1794, when Russian Orthodox missionaries crossed the Bering Strait to convert Aleuts in Alaska, Orthodox churches in the United States were almost entirely immigrant or ethnic—especially after the Russian Revolution, which spelled an end to the Russian Orthodox Church's attempts to do missionary work with Americans. "The whole history of Orthodoxy in North America from 1918 until relatively recently is a terrible story," says A. Gregg Roeber, a Penn State professor of early modern history and religious studies.

But that story took a dramatic turn 20 years ago, when a group of about 2,000 evangelicals converted en masse into the Antiochian Orthodox Church. The conversion had been nearly two decades in the making. In 1968, a Campus Crusade for Christ executive named Peter Gillquist became disenchanted with the group's parachurch identity, but he could not find an existing evangelical church that met his spiritual needs. Gillquist joined with about half a dozen other similarly disenchanted Campus Crusade for Christ staffers and embarked on what they called, somewhat cheekily, "the phantom search for the perfect church." As Gillquist recounts in his memoir, *Becoming Orthodox*, "Our basic question was, whatever happened to that Church we read about in the pages of the New Testament? Was it still around? If so, where? We wanted to be a part of it." Much like Wilbur Ellsworth would do years later, Gillquist and his fellow sojourners worked their way back through church history and doctrine before they finally came to 1054 and the East-West Schism and, thus, a fork in the road. One path took them to Rome and the West; the other to Constantinople and the East. Gillquist and the others thought the East was right to resist papal excesses; they also thought the East was right to insist on equality among the Holy Trinity, rather than relegating the Holy Spirit to a lesser place than God the Father and God the Son. They concluded, almost reluctantly, that they were Orthodox.

Unlike Ellsworth, though, Gillquist and his group had no clearly laid-out path to becoming Orthodox. For nearly ten years, as they formed their own organization called the Evangelical Orthodox Church and gained their own followers, they tried—and failed—to join the Orthodox Church. In 1985, about 20 of them traveled all the way to Istanbul to seek the acceptance of the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church, only to be turned away moments before their scheduled meeting. Greek Orthodox officials were evidently worried that Gillquist and his group weren't sufficiently committed to promoting Hellenistic culture.

Finally, Metropolitan Philip Saliba, the archbishop of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, came to their rescue. Born and raised in Lebanon, Metropolitan Philip came to the United States in the 1950s and studied history at Wayne State University in Michigan. He stayed and became an Orthodox priest, initially leading a congregation of mostly Lebanese and Syrian immigrants in Cleveland. But he had a vision of growing the Orthodox Church in the United States. Importantly, his vision wasn't constrained by any sort of nationalist or ethnic pride; while the other two large Orthodox jurisdictions in the United States—the Russian and Greek Orthodox Churches—conducted their liturgies in Slavonic or Greek, the Lebanese, Syrian, and other Arab immigrants who attended Antiochian Orthodox Churches were more assimilationist and often conducted their liturgies in English.

When Metropolitan Philip learned of Gillquist and his group, he seized on the opportunity. In 1987, he converted most of the clergy and the members of the Evangelical Orthodox Church into the Antiochian Orthodox Church.

Since that conversion, the number of Antiochian Orthodox Church parishes in the United States has more than doubled, largely through the efforts of Gillquist, who serves as the Director of the Department of Missions and Evangelism for the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese. Although Gillquist is now 69 and a cancer survivor, he continues to travel around the United States, evangelizing on behalf of the Orthodox Church with a particular eye toward converting evangelicals. "Right now, the flood of evangelicals [interested in Orthodoxy] is just overwhelming," he says.

When Wilbur Ellsworth ministered at First Baptist, a typical Sunday service—held inside the church's immense but unadorned white-walled, burgundy-carpeted sanctuary—went something like this: Wearing a suit and tie, Ellsworth would stand at a pulpit and preach. Aside from occasionally rising in prayer and joining the church choir and orchestra in some traditional Protestant hymns, the congregants would largely refrain from any activity during the one-hour-and-15-minute service—except for once a month, when they would receive communion.

The service Ellsworth now leads at Holy Transfiguration, by contrast, has an entirely different feel. Wearing his priestly vestments and standing inside the church's small sanctuary—which boasts yellow walls covered with hundreds of tiny iconic pictures of saints and Oriental rugs on the floor—Ellsworth conducts much of the service from behind the iconostasis (or icon wall) where he is out of view of the congregation. The congregants stand for most of the two-hour service, constantly prostrating and crossing themselves, and the only music is rhythmic Byzantine chanting. At the end of the service, they file up to the front of the sanctuary—as they do every Sunday—and take communion. It's easy to see how, for someone reared in an evangelical church, the Orthodox Church might seem like something not just from another culture, but another world.

And yet it is precisely that otherworldliness that is part of what is attracting a growing number of evangelicals to the Orthodox Church. Since the late nineteenth century, when fundamentalism emerged as a response to the increasing cosmopolitanism of mainline Protestant denominations, evangelicalism has been an anti-modern movement. But, at the same time, with its belief in the importance of saving lost souls, evangelicalism hasn't been able to completely divorce it-

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self from modern culture—and, in the latter half of the twentieth century, it began to increasingly try to employ or co-opt aspects of the modern world in its efforts to lure "seekers" and others to the faith. As Ellsworth explains, one of the principal attractions of the Orthodox Church for him is its solidity—and lack of interest in integrating modern life. "There is, in the Orthodox Church, an enormous conservatism," he marvels. "There is not going to be a radical change in the worship life of the church next week."

This is an appealing idea, particularly to younger Orthodox converts who view evangelicalism as corrupted by the generation born right after World War II. "Baby boomers had an overweening confidence that our creativity and spontaneity was fascinating and rich," says Frederica Mathewes-Greene, a one-time charismatic Episcopalian who's now a prominent Orthodox speaker and author. "The following generation sees it as not all that rich. They find the decades of the rock band onstage performing songs kind of shallow. They're looking past their parents for something earlier."

They're also looking for something with more intellectual depth. The evangelical church has a long history of anti-intellectualism: As the early twentieth-century evangelist Billy Sunday proclaimed, "When the word of God says one thing and scholarship says another, scholarship can go to hell." Some evangelicals who became Orthodox simply could no longer tolerate evangelicalism's anti-intellectualism. As Mark Noll, a professor of history at Notre Dame and the author of *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, explains, "After the Second World War, after the boom in education, there were a lot of sectarian evangelicals who became educated and started reading widely and had experience in urban areas—all of which undermined the form of the Christianity they'd been raised with, although not necessarily their Christianity. It seems almost inevitable that, as some evangelicals become more interested in history, culture, Europe, and the broader world events of the twentieth century, that, within that group, there are going to be some who are attracted to Orthodoxy."

Gillquist and Ellsworth are among those who feel evangelicalism has mistakenly staked its foundation on the changing concept of personal Christian experience rather than on the firmer ground of theological doctrine. "Evangelical theology is rooted in only the last twenty-five percent of the history of the church, the post-Reformation period," Ellsworth says. "Orthodoxy goes back to the church fathers; it goes back to the roots and the first seventy-five percent of church history. There is a very real sense of continuity." Lacking this continuity, evangelicalism must continually adapt to modern life, a process that Orthodox converts like Gillquist say has inhibited the church's intellectual growth. "Worship has now been basically reduced to entertainment," he explains. "That carries people for two years, and then they start looking for something with more depth. Those are the people who we pick up: serious Christians who are hungry for more."

And, in some respects, hungry for less. Although the culture wars seem like a staple of evangelical life, the converts suggest that there is a growing fatigue with this worldly fight. One of the more striking things about the Orthodox Church is that it's not very political. That's not to say it isn't conservative. "As Orthodox, we don't believe that being gay is a legitimate alternative lifestyle, we believe it's an aberration. We also say abortion is murder," says Gillquist. But, unlike in many evangelical churches, these views—while strongly held—tend not to come up in the course of worship. As Daniel Larison, a conservative writer and Orthodox convert who attends a Russian Orthodox Church in Chicago, says, "As a general rule, the sermons are going to be related to the gospel and that's about it. Political themes and political ideas don't come into sermons directly. That's not why people are there. They want to keep that as far away as possible."

And, by keeping it far away, the Orthodox Church has been immune to the social and political conflicts that frequently flare up in the Anglican and Catholic Churches, where disaffected evangelicals once typically sought refuge. "In the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Church, there's a lot of dialogue with the culture: For instance, what do we do with the whole creation versus evolution thing? Where does science play in?" says Andrew Henderson, an evangelical-turned-Anglican who recently converted to Orthodox Christianity and worships at Holy Transfiguration. "In the Orthodox Church, with that Eastern mindset that's just so ancient, those questions haven't really arisen. It just isn't a concern."

On the morning after the Vespers service, I went to Holy Transfiguration to attend Sunday mass. The turnout was much better than the night before, with nearly 100 people crowded into the small sanctuary. When the service was over, they headed to a basement social hall for a post-mass meal. The Orthodox Church had recently ended a month-long fast—during which church members were prohibited from eating meat and dairy and subsisted on what's basically a vegan diet—and so the congregants eagerly gorged on meatballs and beef casserole. One of those enjoying the meal was Jordan DeRenzo.

A recent graduate of North Central College in nearby Naperville, DeRenzo was also a recent Orthodox convert. She had once belonged to First Baptist. When Ellsworth decided to convert to the Orthodox Church, she converted with him.

After the meal, as I sat with her and several other Holy Transfiguration parishioners in the now mostly empty sanctuary, DeRenzo, like a recent convert to any religion, spoke passionately about her new spiritual home. The things about it that had once seemed strange to her—such as the fasting and the icons—she now embraced. Fasting brought her body in line with her spirit; she was also hoping to attend icon school so she could be taught how to draw her own pictures of the Orthodox saints. "It's learning how to love something that is foreign," she said.

But it wasn't just the foreignness of the Orthodox Church; it was its bigness that appealed to DeRenzo, as well. Indeed, as she continued to talk, it became clear that, as an evangelical, she had felt very small and alone. It was a surprising sentiment to hear from someone about the evangelical movement. After all, ever since the rise of the Moral Majority, American evangelicals have arguably been the most politically powerful religious group in the country. But perhaps the most telling revelation of the Orthodox conversion trend is that this political power has not translated into a sense of spiritual power—or belonging. For these converts, it seems, the Orthodox Church has solved the unbearable lightness of being evangelical. "When I was in [an evangelical church], I was thinking, 'This is great, I love this,'" DeRenzo said. "But I thought, and I don't mean to be morbid, but eventually some day this pastor is going to die or I'm going to move away, so if this is the only place in the world where the truth is, that's tragic." DeRenzo paused and looked around the sanctuary at the icons and the candles. She went on, "Coming to the Orthodox Church means that I am in communion with that church no matter where I am in the world, that I can go into that church wherever I am and have the same liturgy and celebrate the same way. I'll be in communion with other people. And that is so huge. That hugeness is so exciting." ◆

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

SURVIVING

THE VERY NAME of Primo Levi stops the heart. Affection then floods in, because, of all Holocaust survivors, he is among the closest—through his books, his darkly humane books. When Irving Howe reviewed one of Levi's books, the last line of that review was "What is the Italian for *mensch*?" Many of us shared the question.

Levi was liberated from Auschwitz in January 1945 and, with some other Italians, headed for home. No transportation was provided, and it took more than eight months, with wanderings toward and away from Italy, before he reached his home city, Turin. Years later, he wrote an account of this journey, called in Italy *La Tregua (The Truce)*, because those eight months seemed like an interlude in the world's growlings, between the end of World War II and whatever was coming next. The book was published here as *The Reawakening*. Just to twist matters further, when Francesco Rosi made a film of it in 1997, he went back to *The Truce* as his title.

Rosi's film was fiction, with John Turturro as Levi, and, earnest though it was, it never reached the essential gravitas. Now, on the twentieth anniversary of Levi's death, an Italian film-maker named Davide Ferrario presents *Primo Levi's Journey*. This is not a version, in fiction or otherwise, of Levi: it is the chronicle of a journey made by Ferrario and his co-screenwriter Marco Belpoliti as they followed, figuratively, Levi's footsteps from Auschwitz to Turin. They mean to show us, as far as is tenable, the Europe that today supplants the one through which the Auschwitz survivor made his way. The intent is unavoidably ironic, and in considerable measure it succeeds.

The languages are those of the countries through which the film moves, but there are frequent passages of Levi's text in English, read quite decently by Chris Cooper. The film is muzzied slightly by some sequences that were not made in the year when the film was shot (2005); on the other hand, it is bolstered by some archival footage done when Levi revisited Auschwitz, footage that is silently eloquent.

The Europe that Ferrario visits is for the most part one that we know about, but it is seen here through a latter-day Levi prism. The steel mill at Nowa Huta outside Kraków, built proudly by the communists and now abandoned, is toured with the Polish director Andrzej Wajda as guide for these film-makers. In L'viv we attend the funeral of a Ukrainian musician who was murdered by a Russian mob. The local KGB of Belarus are nervous about Ferrario's filming, and they have to be soothed. The city of Prypiat as we see it is empty and haunted, lying as it does in the Chernobyl zone. In Munich (Ferrario and friend are faithful to Levi's circuitous route) the neo-Nazis whom we meet are sweetly reasonable.

ANTHONY RUSSO

Some stretches of the journey are pleasant, even happy; as for the rest, we must remember that Ferrario presumably made choices to support his shadowy view. Still, at the last the film exemplifies what Levi said when he and his friends left a people who had hated them: "We climbed into our trucks with heavy hearts. We had felt no joy in seeing Vienna undone and the Germans broken, but rather anguish: not compassion, but a larger anguish, which was mixed up with our own misery, with the heavy, threatening sensation of an irreparable and definitive evil … the seed of future harm." This sensation apparently continued to haunt him until 1987, when he rid himself of it.

PRIMO LEVI'S JOURNEY
Cinema Guild

BLAME IT ON FIDEL
Koch Lorber

DANS PARIS
IFC First Take

THE DAUGHTERS of two famous film figures are involved in *Blame It on Fidel*, and they acquit themselves so well that they stifle the idea of nepotism before it can yelp. Certainly their fathers' fame must have helped them get their jobs, but once there, they must have made everyone glad of it.

Julie Gavras (daughter of Costa-Gavras), along with some collaborators, adapted the screenplay from a novel by Domitilla Calamai, which she then directed. This is Gavras's first feature, and—not surprisingly, considering her paternity—it is political. The setting is not Cuba but France in the early 1970s, and the film is about the odd effect that Fidel's communism had on a child there. Julie Depardieu (daughter of Gérard) plays the mother of two children: Anna, a girl of about nine, and her brother François, about four. Depardieu never fades from the story, she is always vital and true, but the real—and unique—subject is her daughter. It would be canted to say that we experience those politically freighted years through a child's eyes: we know what we are hearing when such names as Franco and Allende come up. Yet Anna's dilemmas are central.

Anna, who loves the way she lives and who adores her very Catholic school, is soon surrounded by an ideological swirl. Depardieu's Spanish husband,

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played by Stefano Accorsi, is a lawyer in Paris who has a sister in Spain. She is an anti-Franco communist, and, with her child, she takes refuge in France with her brother. Her condition and the fate of her communist husband have a radicalizing effect on Accorsi. But the leftist atmosphere of the home is tempered by the housekeeper, a Cuban woman who was made a refugee by Castro (hence the title). In the midst of all this militancy is Anna.

She is played by Nina Kervel, who is, even after one has seen many decades of incredible performances by children, astonishing. The film lives through her. Gavras very quickly establishes that she directs with a power of kinesis, a conviction that motion is the core of motion pictures even when little is literally moving; but she is never more fertile and admirable than in her work with Kervel. Astonishing acting by children is so common that I almost subscribe, in acting terms at least, to J. D. Salinger's view that childhood is prime and adulthood diminishes. Anna's little brother (Benjamin Feuillet) hasn't much to do except to forget that he is in front of a camera and to tell us frequently that he is hungry. But Kervel has shades of feeling, of hurt, of secret triumph and defeat, that are beautifully accomplished. All praise to Gavras for her work in general; but her collaboration with Kervel is entrancing.

As for Anna's Catholic school, at first her parents merely ask that she be excused from divinity class; ultimately, they move her to a secular school. In the last shot, just symbolic enough, Anna is standing alone in the busy yard of her new school and at last is invited by some children to join a dancing group. I'm not sure if we are intended at last to praise Fidel for Anna's union with others, but nonetheless this moment is a portent of a life more integrated than her lately divided one.

Paris again, but quite differently. In Gavras's film it is not much more than the place where much of the picture happens. The title of *Dans Paris* (literally "In Paris") explains but also misleads. This is not another valentine to that city.

The picture was written and directed by Christophe Honoré, the fourth of five films he has made. He has also written novels, which I don't know but which—if they resemble *Dans Paris*—would have to be tagged postmodern. Traditional narrative or dramatic structure is carefully avoided here. Honoré implicitly laughs at it. Like a few other French directors, he has simply chosen some characters he thinks are interesting and spends some time with them.

Jonathan and Paul are two brothers in their twenties. They live with their divorced father, who frets and fusses over them. Jonathan is a student when he remembers to go to classes, attractive, high-flown, calmly carefree. Paul, temperamentally opposite, has just broken up with his girlfriend and has returned home in order to be accommodatingly depressed. (A family suicide, before the film begins, has primed him for trouble.) Paul retreats to bed; Jonathan ventures into a number of beds. Their mother, herself not quite retired sexually, visits them to see if she can help. Not much.

To say that there is no story is a truthful exaggeration. A number of incidents occur—many of them eventually comic. For instance, one night Paul throws himself into the Seine and is rather surprised the next morning to find himself home in bed. Clever montage, sometimes interweaving the past with the present, helps greatly to give the film a texture without any structure.

Possibly Honoré's intent was to make a film about Paris that rootedly takes place there but avoids the sentimentalities in most such films. Instead, he displays his cinematic funambulism, which keeps us watching even while the nanny buried in us clucks at his daring. He is greatly helped by his two leading actors. Louis Garrel, a good-looking charmer, makes Jonathan one of those irritatingly fascinating hedonists. Romain Duris (who subsequently played the title role in *Molière*) gives us a depressive whose affliction is like his home.

One not quite secondary matter in Honoré's film stands out. As in most foreign films, most of the characters smoke—some of them incessantly, lighting new cigarettes from butts. For an American viewer, this smoking almost seems aggressive. We can assume that it exists in the society being portrayed, that it is not invented for the film, but because of America's legal stance about smoking (which is quickly becoming the stance of a surprising number of other countries, too), cigarettes in films can no longer be merely incidental. Quite apart from the health issues, which are indisputable, the cigarettes seem defiant. The characters seem to be taking risks as they damn well choose, whatever others might say. In Gavras's film, set in the 1970s, the smoking is simply normal. Not here. It gibes at us. ◆

Sarah Williams Goldhagen on Architecture

AMERICAN COLLAPSE

I.

Within fourteen days of each other, two rush-hour calamities: a bridge collapse and a steam-pipe explosion. In Minneapolis, a forty-year-old bridge along highway I-35W suddenly dropped sixty feet into the Mississippi River, killing at least five people and injuring approximately one hundred more. The federal government had deemed the bridge structurally deficient in 1990, which the Minnesota Department of Transportation acknowledged in separate reports issued in 2005, 2006, and 2007, after inspecting the bridge. In seventeen years, federal and state agencies repeatedly reported significant problems with the fallen bridge and yet no meaningful repairs were made. In midtown Manhattan, meanwhile, an eighty-three-year-old asbestos-wrapped steam pipe exploded, killing one person and injuring dozens more. That pipe is owned by the private utility company Con Edison, whose crews had inspected it earlier the same day and deemed it safe.

Headlines screeching news of these two horrifying events have replaced, temporarily, the usual newspaper rhythm of weekly incantations announcing this or that city's plans for adorning itself with a new stadium, public park, or luminescent museum—announcements that often serve to distract the public's attention from the silent scourge afflicting this country's viscera. One pipe explosion and one bridge collapse just might be enough to rouse the public to the news that America's metropolitan regions are in serious trouble. Bridges, utilities, and flood-prevention systems, whether publicly or privately owned, are grossly neglected. Suburbs are sprawling like unchecked chickweed. Cars are stuck in ever-mounting hours of traffic. Cities are bleeding people. School buildings are

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overpopulated and crumbling. Waters are polluted. Shipping ports are decrepit.

Typically, these matters are discussed piecemeal, as discrete problems beleaguering this or that city or suburb (Minneapolis, Manhattan) or this or that infrastructural element (bridges, utilities). Politicians, voters, and the professional stewards of our built environment—city planners, architects, landscape architects, urban designers, civil engineers—could let inertia run its course and continue to approach such problems, conceptually and politically, in this balkanized manner. If they do, the American media will continue to feast upon these tales of mismanagement and woe, and only marginal, localized improvements will occur. But these problems are not discrete or local. They are part of a larger single phenomenon: America's failure to manage the physical plant of its urban settlements, to maintain what it should while designing, funding, and building desperately needed new facilities.

This country's negligence of its physical plant, its extent and its far-reaching implications, becomes especially evident if we conceive of our urban settlements differently. Dispense with the categories of city, suburb, and exurb; dispense absolutely with the dichotomy of city versus suburb. Instead, consider the city-suburb-exurb nexus as the interwoven entity that it now is: a metropolitan region. This was a principal point of last year's Venice Architecture Biennale, "Cities, Architecture, and Society," a multimedia extravaganza about metropolitan regions around the globe, filled with colored maps and three-dimensional bar-graphs projecting global shifts from 2000 to 2050 in population, demography, literacy rates, and economic growth; exhibiting high-quality photographs documenting the current state of metropolitan regions; and displaying architectural, urban design, and urban planning projects addressing those changes. The related exhibition "Global Cities," curated by Richard Burdett, a professor of architecture and urbanism at the London School of Economics, opened in June in the Turbine Hall of the Tate Gallery in London. In the exhibition's eight-hundred-page catalogue, *Cities: People, Society, Architecture*, Burdett predicts that by 2050, 75 percent of the world's peoples will live in metropolitan regions. More than 80 percent of Americans already do.

Altering our view of the United States to that of a country composed of a collection of metropolitan regions helpfully relegates the local and particularistic qualities of these problems to the background and highlights their commonality instead. And what is that commonality? As Frances Halsband of Kliment & Halsband, a distinguished architect on the Architectural Review Board of the Federal Reserve Bank and the Architecture Advisory Board of the U.S. State Department, puts it in the Architectural League's recent exhibition "New New York: Fast Forward": "Infrastructure, infrastructure, infrastructure."

A view of the collapsed Interstate 35W bridge, August 4

AP PHOTO/CHARLES DHARAPAK

Infrastructure is one crucial point at which politics and architecture merge. A country's physical plant should be front and center in the policy agendas of its public officials, and it should be front and center in the intellectual and professional agendas of the professional stewards of its built environment. For many reasons, this is not the case in the United States. The very notion of infrastructure is financially, physically, and conceptually unwieldy: it encompasses highways, street systems, sidewalks, schools, bicycle paths, mass transportation systems, communication systems, utilities, sewage and water treatment plants, public parks, and complexes of institutional facilities serving civic, cultural, or leisure activities. But infrastructure should be defined not by what it looks like, and not by who designs it or who pays for it, and not by who builds it or actually uses it. It should be defined by whom it is meant to serve. For all its seemingly disparate parts, infrastructure comprises those elements in a metropolitan region's physical landscape that are meant to serve the public—or rather, the sometimes competing, sometimes overlapping, and sometimes wholly discontinuous publics that populate today's American metropolitan areas and are critical to the growth of our country.

A quick survey of the infrastructural elements of the United States' metropolitan regions suggests that a few might be said to be doing tolerably well. The rest, which means those in most of the country, are in horrendous shape. Large swaths of our infrastructure—not just one bridge in Minneapolis, or even a bunch of bridges across the country, or a bunch of asbestos-wrapped steam pipes coursing under our cities' streets—have aged to the point of gross deterioration. To sense the magnitude of the problem, one need look no further than the sobering "Infrastructure Report Card" on the United States, which is published every few years by the country's leading professional organization in the field, the American Society of Civil Engineers. On the ASCE's most recent Report Card, from 2005, not a single one of fifteen categories received a grade higher than a C. Ten of the fifteen categories—including drinking water, waste-water management, navigable waterways, transit, and schools—received scores in the D range.

These grades are not subjective evaluations. Twenty-four of the nation's leading civil engineers analyzed hundreds of reports and studies and surveyed more than two thousand of their colleagues before assigning them. The grades are abundantly substantiated with statistics, the results of research studies, and estimates of the dollar figures necessary for remediation. The ASCE's report on the conditions in most American metropolitan regions reveals a shocking national indifference to the maintenance, upgrad-

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ing, and creative re-conceptualization of our own infrastructure. The ASCE Report Cards from 2003, 2001, and 1998 do not look better.

But never mind grades. Consider facts and numbers. The explosion in Manhattan damaged a number of feeder cables for the city's electric system, closing more than one hundred businesses with an estimated loss of income of $10 million to $30 million, and leaving a crater nearly forty feet in diameter that will disrupt traffic for weeks in one of the city's busiest neighborhoods. The estimated figures for cleaning up the mess in Minneapolis and building a new bridge approach $400 million. And these figures are only for the two most recent catastrophes. More than 160,000 of the nation's nearly 600,000 bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, with I-35W having been one of them. The National Priorities List currently includes 1,237 toxic waste sites, and the Environmental Protection Agency has identified more than 350,000 contaminated sites that need to be cleaned up within the next three decades. Americans spend 3.5 billion hours annually stuck in traffic. In 2000, the National Education Association reported that more than $268 billion was needed to bring the nation's school facilities into good overall condition.

A quick survey of some of the ASCE's monetary estimates betrays this appalling indifference and the catastrophe that it portends. America faces an annual shortfall of $11 billion to replace aging facilities in order to comply with safe drinking water regulations, and yet as of 2005, federal funding for drinking water remained at less than 10 percent of this total. The National Park Service estimates (and probably underestimates) a maintenance backlog of $6.1 billion. In January dozens of beaches in California were closed when heavy rains caused overflow that dumped millions of gallons of raw sewage into the waters. The number of unsafe dams rose by 33 percent between 1998 and 2005. The number of non-federally-owned dams identified as unsafe is increasing at a faster rate than those being repaired. For all the non-federally-owned dams that pose a direct risk to human life if they should fail, the ASCE estimates that $10.1 billion is needed over the next twelve years to make them safe. In sum, the ASCE estimates that the country would need to spend $1.6 trillion in the next five years to bring the country's infrastructure to an acceptable minimum standard.

And that's just getting what we already have back into shape. What about meeting the myriad needs of the reconfiguring world of the twenty-first century? The United States has a rapidly growing population, with certain regions, especially in the Sun Belt, requiring vast new infrastructure. Everywhere there continue to be shifts in population farther and farther from the core cities, making metropolitan regions all that much more far-flung and posing new infrastructural problems and demands. At the same time, we must cope with the phenomenon of "Shrinking Cities," the title of an exhibition at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin in 2004 and of the indispensable three-volume catalogue that accompanied it. When a city's population significantly declines—which has happened in cities as different as New Orleans, the District of Columbia, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis, each of which has lost 30 to 50 percent of its inhabitants in the past half-century—large abandoned swaths of land are left behind. Do we leave depopulated cities to fend for themselves, with their boarded-up buildings deteriorating and HAZARD signs posted on building fronts, creating self-fulfilling prophecies of cities' deaths foretold? Do we neglect the opportunity to develop creative new uses for our nation's waterfronts, many of which are no longer adequate to serve as railway transit or shipping ports, and which currently sit as wastelands in sites as prominent as the west side of Manhattan? Do we ignore the thousands of brownfields—which the Environmental Protection Agency defines as "real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant"—that defile our purple mountains' majesty? Do we just keep building highways and airports, and more highways and airports, when in truth we must begin to reconfigure America's physical landscape to better accommodate its citizens' changing demographic profile, social habits, and economic needs?

How did the United States devolve into this perilous condition? Why has the world's greatest economic and military power neglected what is arguably its most important asset after its people (also much neglected): the infrastructure that literally constitutes its cities and metropolitan regions? How are people choosing, or being shut out of choosing, the physical configuration of their metropolitan regions, from domicile to parkland to sewage-treatment plant? The answers to these questions must come from politicians at the local, the state, and especially the federal levels; and from city planners and civil engineers; and from urban designers, architects, and landscape architects. Unless the problem is viewed with a wide-angle lens that reveals its many mutually reinforcing dimensions, it cannot be properly analyzed.

Visit metropolitan regions in many of the rapidly developing countries in Asia, and the gross inferiority of America's physical infrastructure is immediately apparent. Highways and roads in those countries are not pitted moonscapes. Public transportation, from trains to trolleys to buses, is plentiful, in good repair, and punctual. Public structures of all kinds—from governmental and civic buildings to public parks and urban plazas to "streetscape" elements such as pedestrian bridges and roadway lighting fixtures—are of immensely higher design quality and in immensely better shape. At every turn, a citizen moving through the built environment of these countries sees and uses physically embodied signs communicating to them that in their society, public life matters.

But forget, if you wish, the vast infrastructural building taking place across economically exploding Asia and the Middle East. Look no farther than Europe or Canada, areas in what used to be called the industrialized world, where metropolitan regions are facing the same problems of demographic shifts, higher labor costs, and aging infrastructure that we face in the United States. Again and again we find examples of metropolitan regions that have successfully risen to these challenges. Two of the most extraordinary recent success stories are Barcelona and Vancouver. Barcelona, in preparation for the Summer Olympics in 1992, remade itself by hiring world-class city planners, urban designers, architects, and civil engineers to rehabilitate its aged urban center, construct an Olympic Village that has become a new settlement in its metropolitan region, construct a new ring road, and reclaim its waterfront by transforming miles upon miles of beaches into parkland with bicycle paths, marinas, swimming areas, urban plazas, and high-quality residential fabric—all accessible by public transportation. And Vancouver's physical remaking in the past two decades has been so remarkable that it has become a phenomenon, a brand: the "Vancouver Miracle," a city that, twenty years ago, was an

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emptied-out downtown littered with disused industrial lots and is today a lively, high-density, twenty-four-hour city filled with attractively designed high-rise residential and office towers, well-preserved historic buildings, plentiful public parks, and vibrant cultural institutions. Vancouver is currently the fastest-growing residential downtown in North America.

Infrastructure is an amorphous topic. Building it and maintaining it is staggeringly expensive. In the eyes of many voters, elected officials, and professional stewards of the built environment, maintaining it, trying to visualize what it should be or could be, is just plain boring. Re-orienting ourselves toward our infrastructure and bringing it up to date requires clearing away multiple political, social, and conceptual obstacles. As this past spring's exhibitions on Robert Moses in New York City made clear about the politics of American infrastructure, the nature of the American democratic system discourages the long-term planning, the commitment to public investment, and the vertical coordination of federal, state, and local initiatives that most advanced industrial countries enjoy, which are fundamental to the establishment, maintenance, and upgrading of the existing infrastructure, not to mention the initiation of new projects.

American citizens know that they and their children need safe bridges, clean drinking water, public school buildings that do not force classes to convene in hallways or leak or cause sick building syndrome, and clean and healthy parks so that playing children are not forced onto city streets or toxic waste sites. Yet voters are exquisitely prone to sticker shock, and large-scale infrastructural projects—a new mass-transit line, a new park or waterway system, a bridge—cost an extraordinary amount of money. Indeed, the projected dollar amounts themselves are often enough to cause the political equivalent of what psychologists of trauma call dissociation. (Did you say $14.6 *billion* for Boston's Central Artery project?) Even smaller-scale projects—a new public school, a waterfront park (such as Pittsburgh's $22 million Allegheny Riverfront Park, or the recently completed $85 million Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle), an urban public plaza (such as the $650 million retooling of Lincoln Center in New York City to make it more user-friendly and accessible to the public)—seem fantastically expensive to anyone who has no experience of planning and managing costs for any major construction project—in other words, to nearly everyone, including nearly every one of our voting citizens.

When a proposed tax or budget item can be specifically linked to the officials whom voters elect to their own state or local offices, the political disincentives to address a metropolitan region's infrastructural needs are enormous. Funding maintenance for existing infrastructure is doubly challenging because there is not even the political reward of a shining new public amenity. If Madame Governor proposes a good or necessary infrastructure project, should she keep trying to push the project through when the bidding process is complete and her constituents balk at its projected cost? Should she do so if the ultimate cost is her job? Should she do so with the knowledge that, at any point along the way, from conception to design to construction, determined and vocal detractors can point to the mounting dollar signs, and portray that project as a sinkhole for taxpayer money, and derail it?

Even in the heyday of American infrastructure-building, from 1930 to 1970, it took an imperious wheeler-dealer such as Robert Moses to take maximal advantage of the funds that the federal government was making available to American cities: owing to Moses, for example, New York City received more than twice the Title I funds for slum clearance of any other city in the country. Robert Caro, Moses's biographer, who was simultaneously fascinated and revolted by Moses's labyrinthine anti-democratic conception of his calling, conceded in *The Power Broker* that "the problem of constructing large-scale public works in a crowded urban setting, where such works impinge upon the lives of or displace thousands of voters, is one that democracy has not yet solved." American democracy, that is.

The neglect of infrastructure has dramatically worsened since the 1970s, for two reasons. First, the country has undergone a structural transformation from city-suburb-exurb-farmland, a constellation that does not necessarily conflict with the tripartite local-state-federal structure of our government, into metropolitan regions, a constellation that does conflict with that structure. We are stuck with the existing political, legal, and institutional structures of states (usually bigger than metropolitan areas) and municipalities (smaller and self-interested) through which almost everything must be organized and funneled. Neither is the right kind of entity for managing a metropolitan region, but together they inevita-

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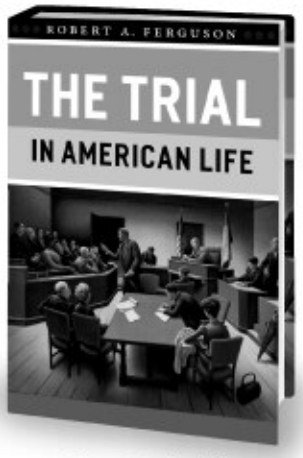

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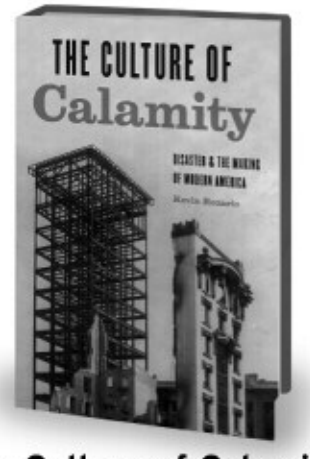

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bly organize our thinking and, more important, our policy planning, which turns out to be too unfocused (in the case of states) or too hyper-focused (in the case of municipalities).

Second, the federal government has increasingly fobbed off the responsibility for maintaining and upgrading the country's infrastructure onto state and local governments, which bear the legal obligation to attend to their regions' infrastructure but are systemically constituted in such a manner that only rarely can they command the financial resources adequate to accomplish the necessary tasks. A Congressional Budget Office study reveals that an immediate and steady decline in federal spending on infrastructure as a percentage of GDP began with Reagan's first budget and continues straight downhill, with the average annual amount in 1982–1998 being 29 percent less than in 1965–1981. While in the earlier period the average was .93 percent of GDP, in the last year of the CBO's study the downward trend had brought spending all the way down to .57 percent of GDP—a drop of almost 40 percent. Federal spending on infrastructure as a percentage of all federal spending between these two periods, which include Republican and Democratic administrations, declined even more, by 33 percent. And states and municipalities have not picked up the slack: state and local spending throughout these years has hovered around a little less than 2 percent of GDP. Max Sawicky of the Economic Policy Institute uses somewhat different measurements, though his figures for public net investment in physical capital come up to 2006: he estimates that for the ten years between 1959 and 1969, public net investment in physical capital was about 2.6 percent of GDP; but for the last ten years it has been about 1.1 percent.

Without a large federal role, infrastructural needs cannot be effectively addressed, in part because the American political system has always made it difficult for state and local governments to do so, and in part because metropolitan regions cut across municipal and sometimes even state lines. This is one of those tasks that only the federal government can accomplish. A dramatic example of why state and local governments cannot go it alone on infrastructure building comes from New Mexico, which has recently completed a new four-lane highway: when that new highway reaches the Colorado state border, it dies into two lanes, because the state of Colorado has not coughed up the funds to continue it. Owing to the disincentives to address the country's infrastructure that are built into the American democratic system—and to the rightward shove of our governance in the last twenty years, which has militated against even discussing, let alone addressing, large-scale public needs—the political obstacles to taking America's infrastructural problems seriously are enormous. Shouldn't we think about our country's physical plant in terms not that different from our legal and regulatory systems in general—as a necessary foundation for the social and economic health and growth of this country, requiring substantial federal leadership and funding? We need a national infrastructure for infrastructure.

II.

Those are not the only reasons for this American crisis. There is also a cultural obstacle: the public's lack of faith in expertise when it comes to the planning and the construction of our physical environment. This is truly bizarre. When you have legal needs, you go to a person trained to deal with them, to a lawyer. For medical needs, to a doctor. For electrical needs, to an electrician; for investment needs, to a financial expert. But for the needs of infrastructure and urban planning and design, the politicians and the public are leery if not downright dismissive of the experts trained to deal with such problems: city planners, urban designers, architects, landscape architects, and civil engineers.

There are many reasons for the low esteem in which the public currently holds these experts in the built environment. Some are justified, others are not. It began with the widely publicized failures of the federally funded slum clearance and urban renewal programs of the 1960s, which nurtured a crude morality tale of the consequences of governmental intervention in the country's physical plant, a David-and-Goliath melodrama played out in the standoff between a feisty little lady named Jane Jacobs and an outsize predatory "expert" named Robert Moses. An overly simplistic and misleading fable was born, according to which government should keep its grubby hands off our cities. Nearly half a century later, this legend continues to dominate public thinking about how our country's infrastructure should be managed.

ANTHONY RUSSO

Today's city planners are seen as clueless and well-meaning bureaucrats at best, and as anti-democratic elitists at worst. Architects, landscape architects, and urban designers (including the many who do not merit the slander) are depicted as divas who care more about fancy forms than about the people who live in their buildings or the clients who build them. Expertise in the built environment is often held in public ridicule. As a result, folk wisdom has it that it is up to the public-spirited citizen—the community board activist, the local environmental review agency, the historic preservation commission—to stop them: thus unwittingly validating a salient quotation that was prominently displayed in one of the Moses exhibitions. "The critics," he once said, "build nothing."

Sadly, the public's mistrust of the experts who should be advising politicians on how to address the multifarious problems of the American infrastructure is not wholly misplaced. To be sure, there are many talented public officials, city planners, urban designers, and architects who are committed to working in the interest of the public good. Yet there are also many professionals who have resigned themselves to working within the ever-narrowing constraints that the public assigns to them of designing mainly signature projects. The most self-damning example of this was the architecture and design community's befuddled and largely negative reaction to Burdett's call-to-arms "Global Cities" exhibition. The maps, the bar graphs, and the statistics confounded them. The exhibition was roundly condemned as "boring." Such reactions are all too common. As a result, American architects sometimes run the risk of appearing to be little more than glorified shoe designers.

When evaluating the professional practice of American designers, we need to consider their substantial contribution to the current infrastructural morass. American design professionals have failed to conceptualize, or to communicate effectively, theoretical and practical visions of how the American infrastructural landscape might be reconfigured to address the challenges of the new century. In the architecture and urban design community, for example, only two visions—both glaringly inadequate—currently dominate the discourse about the future of urban life: one propounded by the Congress for New Urbanism, founded largely by Andreas Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and another put forth by

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the Office for Metropolitan Architecture, founded by Rem Koolhaas.

The CNU, inspired by the ideas in Jacobs's *The Death and Life of American Cities*, promotes a more or less sensible set of principles for urban development that are now commonly accepted: zoning should nurture a mix of commercial, retail, and residential uses; density is preferable to sprawl; nodal communities are preferable to bedroom suburbs; infrastructural planning should prioritize mass transit over the automobile; and so on. Yet the problem with the New Urbanism (with the exception of some excellent work being done in California by Peter Calthorpe and others) is that for all Duany's rhetorical bluster and for all the CNU's talk of heterogeneity, actually executed New Urbanist plans tend to be excessively legislated, code-bound, and architecturally reactionary. The two most famous New Urbanist projects are unbearably homogeneous, socially and architecturally: Seaside, in Florida, the set for the movie *The Truman Show*; and Celebration, also in Florida, built by the Disney Corporation and as fanatically controlled as any of that company's other products.

The only serious high-profile competitor to the CNU as a vision for the twenty-first century has been trumpeted by Koolhaas and his many far-flung acolytes; but Koolhaas's "everything is funky, let it be" attitude amounts to little more than developer-friendly urbanism and is no more satisfactory. I know of only one promising new vision on the horizon, from James Corner of Field Operations in New York City. Field Operations is committed to an interdisciplinary approach to the infrastructural, ecological, and social problems facing metropolitan regions, and it draws from landscape architecture, architecture, urban design, and civil engineering in celebrated (but as yet unexecuted) projects, including prize-winning designs for the University of Puerto Rico and for the 2,200-acre Fresh Kills landfill in Staten Island.

So what, if anything, is being done for the infrastructure of our metropolitan regions today? Answering this question properly requires discipline. One must keep one's eye on the concrete. One must consider—and, when appropriate, applaud—well-meaning, carefully conceived, often highly publicized *plans*, such as Mayor Michael Bloomberg's 2030 plan for New York City, and Mayor Richard Daley's Central Area Plan for Chicago, which includes an initiative to make the Windy City "the greenest in America." And then one must turn away from what is on paper to examine what is taking place on the ground. And what is taking place? Well, not much, as the two recent catastrophes and the figures of neglect, decrepitude, and financial shortfalls tell us. And much of what *is* being done is pernicious.

Since city and even state governments can rarely undertake such large-scale initiatives on their own, the maintenance and the upgrading of our metropolitan regions' infrastructures is falling ever more into private hands. *Business Week* recently reported that dollar-starved city and state governments are selling off parts of their public infrastructures to the highest private bidder. Morgan Stanley, Merrill Lynch, Goldman Sachs, and other firms have started negotiating the purchase of, or have already bought up, a myriad of what once were and should properly be public facilities: roadways (pieces of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the Colorado Northwest Parkway, the Chicago Skyway, and the Indiana Toll Road have already been sold), water systems (the city of Atlanta), and so on. The sales of the Tappan Zee Bridge, Chicago's Midway Airport, and Philadelphia International Airport have been explored.

In isolated instances, the privatization of the infrastructure of our metropolitan regions can have happy results. One example is the recently completed Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, a project designed by Weiss/Manfredi of New York that truly does serve the public and successfully manages many of the issues faced by many American metropolitan regions. The Olympic Sculpture Park reconnects downtown Seattle to its waterfront with V-shaped geometries that create a meandering, multilevel path beginning at the city's edge, straddling the linear gashes of a superhighway and active railroad tracks, and leading to a newly rehabilitated waterfront with a well-designed public esplanade. But the Olympic Sculpture Park, though a public amenity, was funded almost entirely through private philanthropic donations raised by the Seattle Art Museum, which abuts the site. It can hardly serve as a reproducible model for other cities and states looking for ways to manage the infrastructure of their downtowns or metropolitan regions.

More typical are the so-called public-private partnerships to which desperate cities across the country have been increasingly turning since the 1970s. One such project is Atlantic Yards in Brooklyn. Headlines on this project have predictably run this way: Brooklyn teams up with the developer Bruce Ratner to create a major new project that will contain private residences (which will profit the developer) and new public amenities. This project will jump-start the economic revitalization of downtown Brooklyn. Then a few years go by. New headlines: New York City has granted Atlantic Yards developer Bruce Ratner X, Y, and Z additional zoning, or land use, or other concessions. These concessions threaten to severely limit public access to the project. Yet if the concessions are not granted, the developer may pull out, to the economic detriment of the city. If Atlantic Yards is built as it is now envisioned, its public spaces are likely to suffer the same fate as those "privately owned public spaces" in Manhattan that Jerold Kayden meticulously documented in his book *Privately Owned Public Space: The New York City Experience*. Kayden studied the "public spaces" built by private developers from the 1960s onward in exchange for various land and air rights bonuses. He discovered that, absent vigorous oversight from municipal authorities, many of those spaces had been locked up, hidden away with plantings or other design elements, or so ill-maintained that one would have to completely redefine the meaning of "public" for them to qualify.

The privatization of the country's infrastructure is the current trend. In the short term it spells social disaster, and in the long term it spells economic disaster. The short term: will the private companies buying up our highways or airports be committed to maintaining free access and mobility to financially disadvantaged customers? Not likely. Will they even pretend to maintain—much less to upgrade—the infrastructure they own if it becomes financially more advantageous for them to put their resources toward some other enterprise instead? Not likely, as Con Ed's engineers inadvertently demonstrated with their inspection of the steam pipe the very morning of the day it exploded. Will private companies devise plans that will accommodate large social changes when they must be answerable to shareholders focused on annual reports? Not likely. And the long term: the piecemeal privatization of the nation's infrastructure will not, almost by definition, be effectively coordinated to create the continuous and continuously functional system on which this country's economic growth depends.

Even strict free marketeers should take pause at the less immediate but cer-

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tainly inevitable economic consequences of this trend. Here is Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*: it is the "duty of the sovereign or commonwealth" to erect and to maintain "public institutions and those public works, which, though they may be in the highest degree advantageous to a great society, are, however, of such a nature that the profit could never repay the expense to any individual or small number of individuals, and which it therefore cannot be expected that any individual or small number of individuals should erect or maintain." Infrastructure is the classic public good that the free market does not and cannot provide. On the scale that is necessary, only the federal government can make the difference.

Other advanced industrial countries (Canada, Spain, Germany, Japan, Korea—the list goes on) point the way to very successful and economically more viable paths toward addressing the infrastructural crisis. Policymakers at all levels of government and this country's design professionals must begin to accept that we are now a country of metropolitan regions. Then they must work in concert for change. Government officials at all levels, especially at the federal level, must take it upon themselves to address the maintenance, upgrading, and reconceptualization of the nation's infrastructure. We are well beyond the point of needing a congressional commission to assess the state of the nation's infrastructure (though any action is better than none). We need a National Infrastructure Agency to plan, provide expertise for, fund, and coordinate long-term initiatives for infrastructural maintenance and improvement. At the very least Congress should establish a federal line-item capital budget, as most other developed countries have, which would help to reduce the perpetual scanting of long-term budgetary needs in favor of short-term ones. State officials should demand federal assistance to address their infrastructural needs. Municipal officials should find the legal and political mechanisms (such as metropolitan district authorities of broad scope) that would allow them to work in concert with, rather than in competition with, their counterparts in neighboring communities. Leading design professionals should refuse to be merely producers of high-end cultural icons and luxury housing, and make themselves relevant to every part of the infrastructure challenge, and work to re-instate the public's trust in their authority.

When infrastructural needs large and small have been addressed in the past twenty years, it has been because leaders decided to take action, and then refused to sleep or eat until their pet project was completed, or close to completion. How did Millennium Park in Chicago happen? Daley decided that it should happen and then persuaded people that he was right. How did Boston's Central Artery project happen? Fred Salvucci, then transportation secretary of Massachusetts, lived and breathed that project for nearly two decades, persuading local government officials, state authorities, federal representatives, and community boards that he was right. Why has the pathetically ill-conceived design for the twenty-seven-acre swath of reclaimed land created by burying Boston's Central Artery (I-93), ironically named the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway, been hung out to dry? Because nobody stepped into Salvucci's shoes.

Surely ordinary Americans can recognize this crisis: they drive on it, cursing the traffic, every day. The ribbon of concrete and steel washing into the Mississippi River; the chasm on West 41st Street in New York (or the larger one—very different in origin, to be sure—that remains at New York City's Ground Zero); the boarded-up acres of urban disaster in New Orleans that Hurricane Katrina left behind; the billions of gallons of raw sewage released into our waterways every year; the stupendously mediocre Rose Kennedy Greenway; the bridges and the highways closed because of some spectacular failure or the need for emergency repairs—all these disasters are only the most publicly visible evidence of what happens, or does not happen, when policymakers and design professionals fail to effectively use their power for the oldest and best purpose of all, America's public good. ◆

Jed Perl on Art

MYSTERY MAKERS

Artists have always been fascinated by the labyrinthine, the enigmatic, and the confounding, and this celebration of uncertainty has a particularly strong appeal in our postmodern times. We want art to reflect our confusions; we want to fall under the sway of a mystery maker. This summer New York's biggest museums have been hosting an unlikely but compelling pair of mystery makers. Richard Serra and Neo Rauch, although as different as day and night, are both arbiters of the uncanny. They throw us off balance. They confound our expectations. They draw us into an imaginary universe and leave us feeling estranged.

RICHARD SERRA SCULPTURE: FORTY YEARS
Museum of Modern Art

NEO RAUCH AT THE MET: PARA
Metropolitan Museum of Art

Visitors to the Museum of Modern Art who get lost in the snaking twists and turns of *Sequence*, Serra's immense walk-in sculpture with twelve-foot-high steel walls, are feeling befuddled, quizzical, intrigued, maybe happily so. And this is not all that different from the confusion that grips museumgoers when they take a look at the exhibition of new paintings by Rauch at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Rauch entangles you in some maddening game of Telephone or Charades, because you cannot make sense of the relationships between his curiously clothed characters, or between these characters and the dramatically rendered perspectives they inhabit. These artists—of different generations, different nationalities, different sensibilities—both regard the work of art as an enigma. They approach artistic experience as if it were a form of mystification, which is not an altogether bad way to proceed. The trouble is that neither Serra nor Rauch knows how to shape or clarify or deepen an enigma. In the end, the bafflement that they provoke feels a little bland.

"Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years" is the first really enthusiastically received exhibition that has been mounted at the Modern since the museum reopened in 2004. Of course the new MoMA was a box-office success from the beginning, but the Serra show is something different, an event that the public has connected with in a heartfelt way. And the Rauch exhibition at the Metropolitan, although relatively small and tucked away in a gallery that is not all that easy to find, has been drawing a steady and fervent audience. For Serra, who is sixty-seven, the Modern show is the capstone of his career. There are risks involved in such an apo-

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theosis, as Brice Marden discovered last year when his MoMA retrospective left most of the critics sounding grumpy and deflated, and the galleries often looked abandoned. But Serra is likely to emerge from this universally acclaimed exhibition as a prince of the bohemian city—as exalted as Frank Stella was in his heyday, when he was a young god at the Modern. (Stella is himself featured at the Metropolitan this summer, with presentations of sculpture and architectural models that are coarse and bombastic.)

As for Rauch, who is forty-seven, the show at the Metropolitan gives him the major American exposure that may be needed to push an already high-flying career to the next level. Gary Tinterow, the curator in charge, has picked the right horse if he is betting on who among the lineup of flaked-out realists, darlings of the art fairs and the auctions, is most worthy of our attention. There may be a lot of problems with Rauch's work, but he is an artist of genuine interest, which cannot be said of John Currin, Luc Tuymans, Lisa Yuskavage, or Peter Doig.

For both Serra and Rauch, arriving in New York's greatest museums is an opportunity to confront a new kind of audience even as the setting forces into ever-sharper focus each artist's relationship with the art of the recent and the not-so-recent past. At the Modern, Serra is making his bid to be regarded as one of the modern masters. At the Metropolitan, Rauch's post-Surrealist narratives invoke some of the knottier works in the museum's modern collection, works by Balthus, de Chirico, and the German Expressionists. Both artists have taken rather circuitous routes to their present lofty positions. Neither is an obvious choice for most favorite son. Rauch, who grew up in East Germany, lives in Leipzig, where he studied and still teaches at the Academy. As has often been observed, his figurative style is full of echoes of the socialist realism that dominated art in the Soviet sphere, a desiccated populism that Rauch has scrambled and made hip with allusions to various high art styles. The result is a disquieting narrative atmosphere, thick with nostalgia for a nineteenth-century bourgeois never-never land.

Serra, early in his career, was one of the kingpins of Process Art. The late 1960s were a time when sophisticated modern art was widely said to have lost touch with the museumgoing public, and Serra's freely formed or scattered constructions came to be regarded as among the most esoteric works ever made in America. He would splatter molten lead against an old concrete floor, or hang some loopy pieces of vulcanized rubber on a brick wall. By the 1980s Serra was frequently cited as the epitome of belligerent radical esotericism. *Tilted Arc*, a government commission about which New York City office workers were up in arms because it blocked direct access across Federal Plaza to their workplace, became a symbol of avant-garde elitism run amok. (It didn't help that a workman, a rigger, had once died in the process of installing one of Serra's precipitously balanced creations.) All this makes it especially surprising to contemplate the new audience-friendly Serra of 2007, whose *Intersection II*, mounted this summer in the Modern's Sculpture Garden, has become the giant thingamajig in front of which with-it parents photograph their toddlers, the cuties with their soft skin niftily set off by Serra's brutalist steel walls.

Richard Serra, *Intersection II*, 1992-1993

COURTESY MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

There is no question that this new museum-ready Richard Serra is a far more interesting artist than he was back in his hard-nosed downtown days. His effects are more immediate and more playful, and this is all to the good. As for Rauch, I find something admirable in the narrative complexity of his work, although I doubt that he understands how extraordinarily succinct the storytelling is in the great narrative paintings, whether by Poussin or by Balthus. Sometimes I suspect that Rauch confuses narrative complexity with the narrative kitsch of the old communist style. Indeed, there is an edge of philistinism about the appeal of both Rauch's gaudy allegories and Serra's new sculptures, which are like funhouse contraptions designed for intellectuals.

These artists know how to draw us in, and to some degree they draw us in through the language of art—but beyond a certain point they are not engaging our minds so much as they are playing mind games with us. They suggest the swaggering assertiveness of great art, and of course when you put their work under the same roof as Matisse and Balthus, many critics and museumgoers are inclined to conclude that they are of the same company. But neither Serra nor Rauch has enough of the freestanding lucidity that holds us over the long haul. There is something hackneyed about their sense of form. Rauch doesn't recall the wilder shores of Surrealism so much as the murky brown Neo-Romanticism of the 1930s and 1940s. And the curved shapes of Serra's recent sculptures are routinized and banal, like the shapes of ergonomic kitchen appliances.

The Serra show is not a full retrospective, and in any event there would be no way to gather every aspect of this artist's work inside a museum, given the size of so many of his sculptures and the considerable number of them that are site-specific and permanently installed in various locations around the world. The two largest concentrations of work on view at MoMA focus on the experiments of the late 1960s and the immense, curvaceous structures of the past decade or so. What comes through, early and late, is Serra's let's-try-it spirit, his pleasure in the process of figuring out how to do something interesting with industrial materials. While the earliest works, those loops of vulcanized rubber hanging on the wall and miscellaneous industrial discards scattered across the floor, have a macho bohemian swagger, I do not see that their informality amounts to much more than sloppiness. And I remain unconvinced by the rather grandiose argument, made by Serra and others, that

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here the implications of Pollock's drip technique have been reconceived in the third dimension. There is a containment about the best of Pollock's paintings that is completely lost in the loft-life informality of Serra's early experiments.

Serra first hit his stride with the *Prop* pieces, most of which date from 1969, arrangements of lead plates and lead poles (made of rolled lead), with the elements precariously balanced. Sometimes a lead plate is held against a wall by a leaning pole, sometimes one or two or more lead plates are held vertically by the pressure of a lead pole that rests on top of them. At the Modern, the *Prop* pieces are exhibited behind Plexiglas fences, obviously so that nobody will be hurt by falling lead, and their blunt power is somewhat muffled. They look a bit like dangerous specimens locked up in a zoo. Like so much that was produced a generation or more ago in casually renovated old downtown spaces, these pieces do not transplant very well, certainly not into the museum ambience. And yet a visitor can see that there is a phlegmatic elegance about Serra's bold, simple equations. The *Prop* pieces suggest an overgrown version of a child playing with blocks, the mild amusement suddenly overtaken by the realization that these hunks of lead are very dangerous indeed. These sculptures look like relics pulled out of the substructures of Piranesi's *Carceri*—romantic dread re-imagined as a cool modern experience.

Serra's work takes on a baroque bravado in the *Torqued Ellipses* and other vast structures of recent years. These are the works on which the organizers of the Modern show—Kynaston McShine, chief curator-at-large at the museum, and Lynne Cooke, who is with the Dia Foundation—have chosen to focus after a brief sampling of projects from the 1970s, ever-enlarging riffs on the *Prop* pieces' sense of dangerously balanced planes. When several of the *Torqued Ellipses* were first presented at the Dia Foundation in Chelsea in 1997–1998, the curving structures, with their roughly twelve-foot-high steel walls, had an undeniably theatrical magic. Looking back, they can seem like the curtain-raisers to a decade when the art world was consumed by gigantism; but what at first struck a visitor was the sobriety of Serra's vision. Exhibited in a warehouse space that could barely contain them, Serra's *Torqued Ellipses* got you keyed up.

Like so many people who visited them at Dia, I wanted to see these striking structures from all angles. I was fascinated by the loomingly oppressive character of their exteriors, and by the way that first gloomy impression segued surprisingly into the dizzying openness of the interiors. The *Torqued Ellipses* did not remind me so much of earlier sculpture or architecture as of a certain kind of Mannerist landscape, of those Italian gardens, designed in the sixteenth century, in which a visitor is drawn along constricted, circuitous paths that eventually open into surprisingly expansive vistas. There was a monolithic poetry about Serra's huge structures. And I can't say that I haven't responded to that poetry on repeated sightings of the *Torqued Ellipses* and all the variations that have followed—at the Gagosian Gallery, at the Guggenheim Bilbao, at Dia Beacon, and now at the Modern. But with each visit the monoliths lose some of their lyricism. There is a blast of power about Serra's recent work, and with each successive composition, Serra has aimed to adjust the nature and character and quality of that blast—but it is basically the same blast each time. In the increasingly enlarged dimensions of such recent works as *Sequence* and *Band*, the blast becomes something more like a growl or a moan. Serra is an actor with a single effect, and the effect loses its force with each performance.

The macho formalist, a particularly American role, is a part that Serra plays to the hilt. The Modern catalogue is framed by two photographs of Serra. In the first he is a young man in a black T-shirt and soiled jeans, his thick arms folded across his strong chest as he stands next to a wall on which the words "abstract slavery" are roughly inscribed, the whole registering as some sort of jokey-but-swaggering downtown come-on. In the second photograph he is much older, the black T-shirt has been replaced by a lighter one, and the close-cropped hair is now a bare cranium, but he is still the art-world tough, and he is here to tell us that aesthetics are man's work. Art, with Serra, can sometimes seem to be a branch of engineering, a guy thing, factory-scaled. So of course he is eager to tell us what is technically unique about his recent works, whether in an interview in the MoMA catalogue or on *Charlie Rose*. The idea behind all the recent pieces, as he explains, is that "the volume rotate[s] without changing its radius." What this means is that he has found a way to create a curving wall that curves differently on its equally long top and bottom edges, because the wall itself has been pushed and pulled in varying directions to varying degrees. The result is the precipitously angled, sometimes wave-like, sometimes knife-like quality of these huge steel shapes. They have a blunt elegance. I feel the afterglow of Serra's pleasure in the engineering. I recognize the attentiveness and the intelligence that he brings to problems of conception and execution as he works with technicians in the factories where these behemoths actually come into being.

So what is the problem with Serra's sculpture? These are works that act on the imagination but fail to create an imaginative whole. At the Modern I heard a young man saying to his girlfriend as they emerged from the snaking interior of *Sequence*, "The trouble is that when you're inside you lose the shape"; and that is a part of the problem. I find it significant that in reproducing the sculptures in the Modern catalogue, the choice was frequently made to shoot them from above, a view that gives you precisely the overall shape of which you are unaware in the galleries, where you are confronted with these huge constructions. My guess is that Serra wants us to take in the overall form incrementally, as we move around and through the structures. This does happen, at least to some degree. After I walked around and through *Sequence*, I could see that it was an S-curve made of two parallel walls. I *knew* this, but I did not *feel* it. The forms do not add up as you interact with them, not piece by piece, not glimpse by glimpse. I think this is because these structures are totally lacking in internal articulation. The big visual blast is never broken down into smaller visual moves. A Richard Serra is all or nothing.

Serra has cited, among the essential inspirations for the *Torqued Ellipses*, the oval dome of Borromini's Church of San Carlo in Rome, and I can see the connection. But at San Carlo—and everywhere else in Borromini's work—the seventeenth-century architect adumbrates the grand sweep of his forms in a thousand ways, so that the eye and the mind are able to grasp each overarching formal move in terms of a near infinity of smaller moves. Of course Serra will say that the stripped-down look of the *Torqued Ellipses*, with their gritty steel surfaces, is a modern simplification and amplification of the work of the Baroque master. But I would submit that there is a limit to how large a structure we can take in without some internal articulation, some complication or adumbration that helps us to relate the proportions of the work to the human scale. It is not at all clear, at least not to me, that beyond a certain size sleek modern forms can have a complexly nuanced impact. Alexander Calder, an immensely subtle artist, had a

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difficult time giving a compelling internal scale to his largest stabiles and mobiles; his delicate wit ended up feeling clunky. Serra knows how to grab us, but he does not know how to hold us.

Ultimately, the eye cannot absorb these vast steel inventions. Perhaps more than a visual response, Serra's work demands a kinetic response. And you can see at the Modern that people are taking in his work with their entire bodies. They walk around it, they walk into it. I found myself thinking about Michael Fried's famous essay "Art and Objecthood," published in 1967. Fried attacked what he called the "literalist sensibility" of much new art, complaining that the work of Donald Judd and Robert Morris was basically involved with "a theatrical effect or quality—a kind of *stage* presence." Serra is not mentioned in "Art and Objecthood"—his career had barely begun—and Fried himself has gone on to adumbrate in many books the rich and complex place of theatricality in the history of art. But Serra's new constructions are the perfect case of a sculpture whose power is essentially theatrical. Engaging with Serra's sculpture is an experience that can involve elements of wonder, danger, confusion, delight, intrigue, anxiety, and pleasure. You might as well be taking a roller-coaster ride. You are left with a strong sense of what the work has done to you, but with little sense of the work in and of itself. You gather impressions over a period of time, but they do not add up to an image or form or space that grows in the mind's eye.

It is not surprising that Serra's work feels most at home out-of-doors. At the Modern, the installation of *Intersection II*, with its four curved elements, reclaims for Philip Johnson's Sculpture Garden some of the urban theatrical panache that has been in short supply in recent decades. Here visitors find that they are not so much looking at a work of sculpture as they are taking part in a happening, exploring Serra's curved corridors, seeing how other people respond. Serra's appearance in the Sculpture Garden is the latest in a series of memorable events that stretch back many decades, including the house that Marcel Breuer built in the garden in 1949 and Jean Tinguely's notorious self-destroying sculpture *Homage to New York*, which rattled its way to oblivion in 1960. In the garden it doesn't matter quite so much that Serra's work is such swaggering stuff: his machismo looks provocative for being juxtaposed with Philip Johnson's dandified urbanism. And Serra in the garden is one of a number of bright spots at the Modern this summer. These include the four Joan Mitchell paintings that have been hung in the atrium; the small, elegantly focused show celebrating the hundredth anniversary of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*; and "75 Years of Architecture at MoMA," the first exhibition organized by Barry Bergdoll, the new head of the department of architecture and design, who brings to the museum a kind of breezily elegant scholarly imagination that has been missing in recent years.

Neo Rauch, *Father*, 2007

COURTESY METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

If walking through Serra's sculptures leaves you wondering where you are, you may find that when you stand in front of Neo Rauch's canvases you do not know where his men and his women are, either in relation to one another or in relation to you. The world that we glimpse in Rauch's paintings is part Biedermeier fairy tale, part socialist realist nightmare, part contemporary bohemian ennui. Rauch has titled his show "para," and explained that he wants to evoke, according to Gary Tinterow, "a string of associations with the prefix: paranormal, parallel, paradox, and so on." The first word that came to my mind was paranoia.

If Serra thrusts you into a paradoxical theatrical experience, where parallel planes are skewed and anybody with the slightest inclination toward claustrophobia will begin to feel paranoid, Rauch sets you before a constantly changing stage set, where the figures and their actions suggest panicky narratives and the space changes as swiftly and uneasily as on a movie screen, with near and far exaggerated or compressed at will. What pleases me about Rauch's paintings is the conviction that he brings to these wildly unpredictable scenarios. He has said of the pictures gathered at the Metropolitan that they "grew—like other groups of pictures done before them—out of the floor of my studio as if it was a Witches Circle." And I believe that they simply came to him, because although the conceptions are as artificial as can be, they do not feel at all contrived.

While Rauch was creating this cycle of paintings, he clearly had in mind the low ceiling of the gallery at the Metropolitan where the show is installed, and the wide horizontal formats that he has employed have a winning dramatic pressure. The work suggests a style that might be called the nightmare carnivalesque. Everybody is in some sort of costume, suggesting the military or the working class or the middle class or bohemia, and in some cases the allusions are scrambled, the way they sometimes are in costumes designed for theatrical productions. The settings have a theatrical aura as well. The buildings and the vistas suggest romantic stage sets, as does the frequent appearance of banners and signs in brilliant colors, not to mention the technicolor skies. In *Suburb*, a group of people are putting some banners on fire—or are they trying to put out the fire? In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, women in blue-and-white dresses handle rifles in the foreground, while in the distance a minotaur head is put on a man who stands on a little stage. In *Goldmine*, some sort of animal head and maybe some bones are being loaded into a wheelbarrow by two men who stand near the mine, which gives off a hallucinogenic yellow glow. In *Hunter's Room*, game birds and a large map are hanging on the walls, and three men and a woman are gathered, several holding crossbows. In *The Next Move*, two men in white dinner jackets are smoking in what is probably an artist's studio—

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at least there is a palette and a nude woman on a distant bed.

Rauch has said that he is a conservative. If that is so, then he is a particular kind of conservative, one whose narratives are grounded in the idea of collage, in an assemblage of variegated elements that are charged with energy through the very unexpectedness of their juxtapositions. The situations that Rauch dreams up, though inexplicable, are not so easily dismissed. There is an inevitability about his discombobulations. In *Father*, a young man in a white tie holds in his arms an older man who is the size of a baby; on a table in front of them is a tiny piece of body armor, a kitschy vase, some lit candles; another man stands to the side, holding a small camera. The easiest way to explain this image, I suppose, would be to argue that the young man is coddling his own older self. And yet such an interpretation, which in any event does not go very far, does not really address the strangeness of the image.

There is something engagingly slippery about Rauch's inventions, something likably chaotic about his cabinet of curiosities. You aren't sure if some of his young men are nineteenth-century dandies or coarse contemporary workmen. And his women, with their thick legs and arms and short hair, suggest stern nurses or prison matrons, though maybe they are just slightly diffident younger sisters who haven't quite grown into their good looks. Rauch presents a silly-putty world. You think you are in the early nineteenth century, until you notice something that looks like graffiti spray-painted on a wall. Some oversized figures are shoved right into our faces, while other figures register as mere specks on the horizon. And nobody seems to interact with anybody else. The faces that Rauch paints have closed or semi-closed eyes. This is a somnambulistic world, a parallel universe in which our paranoia is paramount.

I imagine that the more familiar you are with Rauch and his sources, and with German culture in general, the more undercurrents and reverberations you will see. I think I recognize connections to certain artists who interest me. I cannot imagine that Rauch has not made a close study of Balthus, and I find it difficult to believe that the stylized forms of flames and flags in *Suburb* were done without some knowledge of Jean Hélion's great triptych *The Events of May*. I also see connections between what Rauch is doing and the transformation of figure composition into a form of narrative collage that I admire in the work of R. B. Kitaj, and also in several works by Gabriel Laderman, *The House of Death and Life* and *The Dance of Death* (which I doubt Rauch has seen).

But what seems to me to separate Rauch from Balthus, Hélion, Kitaj, and the best of Laderman is his unwillingness to clarify and to sharpen his images as he works on the canvas. There is something rather glib, often almost perfunctory, about the way Rauch renders his dreams. The faces have the vagueness of magazine illustrations. And the handling of paint is too flashy, with whole areas simply scumbled or smeared, and little grace notes scribbled in with the brush. In many of the new paintings the entire surface looks as if it has been covered with a brownish-yellowish tone. Rauch's visions are suggested, sketched in, rather than actually realized in pictorial terms. What is missing is a forceful visual musicality. There is something out-of-focus and murky about the poetry of his work. And for some people this surely becomes part of his appeal. The paintings are more like stage sets than fully realized paintings. They suggest a mood, but they do not fulfill its promise.

Neither Neo Rauch nor Richard Serra is finally willing to commit to the idea of the work of art as a totally self-contained and integrated imaginative whole. And yet the power of their work has everything to do with enveloping us in an all-encompassing experience, an experience that is strikingly strange. I would say that the extent to which their work succeeds is the extent to which they have managed to reinvent a traditional idea of art as mystery-making. And the extent to which they have failed is the extent to which they have refused to articulate or to clarify the precise nature of the mysteries that they have in mind. The greatest mystery makers—Leonardo, Giorgione, Bosch, Goya, Redon—make the elements in their work so formally bewitching that we come to experience whatever illogic there may be as an outgrowth of the formal order—a formal disorder, if you will. In the work of a mystery maker, the enigmas must emerge organically, as a break in the natural order that is also part of the natural order, much as earthquakes, tornadoes, and floods are natural products of earth, air, and water.

I recognize that, for those who think Serra is a master, the bluntness of his enormous works registers a dissent from traditional ideas of articulation—and thereby assures his avant-garde stature. And I see that for those who prefer Rauch to Hélion and to Kitaj and maybe even to Balthus, the glibly sketchy realization of his images may signal a liberation from the strictures of the past. What is at work here, in the enthusiasm for Serra and for Rauch, is an idea that significant art is always a matter of exceptionalism—that the artist who really adds something to tradition stands outside of tradition, that the truly active imagination simply cannot abide by convention. It is this idea, which is somehow in the air at both the Serra and the Rauch shows, that I find disturbing. For there is no reason to believe that a mystery maker cannot operate deep within tradition.

After all is said and done, tradition is the only sure guide that a mystery maker has. There was an exceptional demonstration of the relationship between tradition and mystery-making last spring, in Bill Jensen's beautiful show of abstract paintings at Cheim & Read. In these new works, which are the best paintings that Jensen has exhibited in many years, the artist is paying unabashed homage to the open-ended compositions of the Abstract Expressionists and the easily elegant forms of the Japanese calligraphers. And out of the work of those prophets of indeterminacy, Jensen is building his own powerful enigmas, some in inky nighttime tones, some in stinging, almost technicolor hues. Plunging into the history of art, Jensen is also swimming in his own element. The old mysteries become new mysteries, quite simply because a different artist is at the helm. There is nothing theatrical about Jensen's work, no melodramatic pitch intended to grab us before we are ready. When Jensen fails, it is because the ideas have remained submerged in the very processes of the work. When he succeeds, his overlapping arabesques are as confident as they are confounding. Jensen creates a pictorial world that I can reconstruct as a parallel universe in my imagination.

Jensen is an unabashedly romantic artist, and so in their own ways are Serra and Rauch. We get flashes of the good old romantic values—surprise, enigma, awe, dread—in the work of these artists. Romanticism, with its fascination with the individualistic and the anti-classical and the uncanny, was of course one of the foundations of modernity, fueling both

ANTHONY RUSSO

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the daring reconsiderations of tradition in Picasso and Matisse and the rejection of tradition in Duchamp and the Dadaists. With Jensen, Serra, and Rauch, the romantic impulse registers in very different ways, but always as a desire to throw us off balance, to remove us from ordinary experience, to plunge us into new places. The danger—it is the old romantic danger—is that the experience is so odd or so unstable that it flings us straight out of the realm of art, which is a realm of structure, and in some respects always an orderly realm. Jensen goes to the brink of chaos and pulls back before he goes over the edge. Serra and Rauch are ambivalent about the ordering authority of art. They hanker for art's power and they want to ignite art's fire, but they refuse to accept art's imperatives. And so the feeling in their work remains half-formed. Rauch's tall tales are as elusive as one of those dreams that you forget as soon as you wake up. And the memory of Serra's recent sculptures, which weigh between one hundred and two hundred tons, is as fleeting as the fiery shower of a welder's acetylene torch. ◆

Helen Vendler
LONG LIVE MR. COGITO!

COLLECTED POEMS 1956-1998
By Zbigniew Herbert
Translated by Alissa Valles
(Ecco Press, 624 pp., $34.95)

Zbigniew Herbert is one of the several eminent postwar poets of Poland who have been translated into English, anthologized, commented on, and taught. He is often grouped with his contemporaries Czesław Miłosz, Wisława Szymborska, and Anna Swir; and he is usually described, accurately, as a minimalist poet and a dry ironist. He is famous as the creator of an Everyman whom he called "Mr. Cogito." His work has been celebrated by other poets, notably Stanisław Barańczak, Seamus Heaney, and Adam Zagajewski. Herbert's life was difficult, and at times excruciating: he was confined to Poland until the thaw in 1956, which at last enabled him to publish and to travel. Far from desiring a life elsewhere, he returned to Poland when he was not traveling; he was contemptuous of those who chose a comfortable exile abroad. He himself—unemployable, because he was a political dissident—lived and died in poverty, at one point selling his blood so that he could eat. His latter years, despite fame at home and abroad, were marked by painful illness and a sense of intellectual isolation. He died in 1998.

Herbert wrote plays and prose, but his fame rests on his lyrics—spare, grim, sardonically humorous. Since the poems sprang from his suffering under the occupation of Poland by the Nazis and then by the communists, critics understandably attach them to the history of Poland. There is nothing wrong with that: biography and history are always helpful in giving poetry a context. But when they usurp more literary forms of understanding, they do the poet a disservice. Herbert is not famous because he lived in a cruel and chaotic age; he is famous because he found a way to write, from a Polish existence, works that rarely mention Poland. At most, Herbert may allude to Polish questions allegorically, through mythological or literary characters adapted to his compositional needs; one such poem relates the contest of Apollo and Marsyas, another imagines an address by Fortinbras to Hamlet. Polish readers may link such poems to specific people or events, just as they linked Herbert's withering late poem "Khodasevich" to Miłosz. But as the events of Herbert's era fade from memory, and as his contemporaries die, even such poems will be read as allegorical comments on recurrent human experience—human choice, human savagery, human hypocrisy. Indeed, the insistent despecification practiced by Herbert is one of his many aesthetic choices in favor of reduction, restriction, limitation—the techniques creating his instantly recognizable idiom.

Herbert published nine volumes of verse: the first when he was thirty-two, the last in the year of his death. Poets choose their titles and their title poems with intent, and so I propose—as a way of tracking Herbert's poetic existence—to characterize him by his volume titles, and to ask how he defined himself to his public through those titles. Some of his title poems are well known, some not. I will mention several of Herbert's most famous poems as well, as they too are significant projections of himself. Like many reviewers of Herbert, I cannot read Polish, but it has seemed clear to me, as to others, that Herbert's verse is of the spare sort that can carry over many of its strengths, its essential characteristics, into another language. (I note that the British poet Michael Hofmann, an excellent translator himself, has written in the May 2007 issue of *Poetry* a scathing account of Alissa Valles's translations here, contrasting them to their disadvantage with those produced by Herbert's earlier translators John and Bogdana Carpenter.)

Herbert's poetry begins with *Chord of Light*, which appeared in 1956. There is no poem in it bearing the title "Chord of Light," but the phrase is echoed in two poems. One, called simply "Chord," ends with one of Herbert's persistent prophetic laments—how far we are, as human beings, from the pure loftiness of a star:

> I will point out
> the absent star…
>
> verily verily I say unto you
> great is the abyss
> between us
> and the light

The phrase "chord of light," amplifying the musical into the visible, appears in a poem called "Forest of Arden," describing an earthly paradise, in which a birch trunk, stretching from earth toward heaven, is "like a chord of light":

> so look at the bark's pattern on which
> the chords of music are stretched tight
> a lutenist adjusts the pegs of the strings
> to draw a sound out of what is silent…
>
> therefore expecting no greater reward
> sit yourself down underneath this tree

The heavenly forest is contrasted to "another wood," which is darkly inhabited by a cloud of smoke a forehead marked with black light and a thousand eyelids stretched thin over the unmoving rounds of the eyes a tree broken like bread with the wind the betrayed faith of deserted shelters. The poem ends with the promise to the dead—who "have need of fairy tales too"—that they will "find and unlock the gate / to our Forest of Arden."

Already Herbert's great theme is fully present: the intolerable realities—death, pain, rupture, betrayal—of this world and their defiance of the mind's idealist hunger for the "fairy tale" of a better existence. Already Herbert has adopted his chief stylistic peculiarity—a lowercase font suppressing punctuation—

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together with its consequence, the line as a limited self-standing phrase or sentence. (When Herbert absolutely has to begin a new sentence in the middle of a line, he capitalizes its first word.) The absence of punctuation, and the presentation of thought as a series of successive discrete line-quanta (as opposed to a "stream" of consciousness), mark the epigrammatic interiority of Herbert's lyrics, moving them away from the sphere of public address. (In his later work Herbert will want to turn his address outward while preserving the line syntax and the non-punctuation of his version of subjectivity.)

Chord of Light poured out the poems that Herbert had been saving up during the years when he could not publish. Only a year later he produced a second book, with the obscure title *Hermes, Dog and Star*. Its title poem is one of many prose poems, a favorite genre in Herbert, by which he can emphasize continuity of plot (rather than the disruption of sequence caused by poetic line-breaks). The prose poems are mostly mini-narratives, and they mark the predominance of storytelling—legend-telling, fairy-tale-telling, myth-telling—in Herbert's work. Even the lyrics in *Hermes, Dog and Star* are structured as narratives. They are no longer poems of static meditation.

In the strange title poem, "Hermes, Dog and Star," the lonely Hermes, messenger of the gods, tiring of the company of his fellow gods but knowing that human beings are no better as company because they "betray the gods," asks first a dog, then a star, to be his companion at the end of the world. Each is indifferent to his need. I quote the second encounter:

> They go along and after a while they meet a star.
> —I'm Hermes—the god says—and produces one of his most handsome faces.—Would you by any chance feel like coming with us to the end of the world? I'll try to work it so that it's scary there and you have to lean your head on my arm.
> —OK—says the star in a glassy voice. I don't care where I go. But your saying the end of the world is pure naïveté. Sadly, there is no end of the world.
> They go along. The dog, Hermes, and the star. Holding hands. Hermes thinks to himself: the next time he goes out looking for friends, he won't be so sincere.

The god, the dog, and the star: choosing everything but a human being. But giving up on mortals because they betray you does not make you any better off at the end, alas. Herbert offers in the poem a wry twist to his own appetite for something lower or higher (but not a god!) than human beings.

Why did Herbert choose to cast his ironic self-portrait as Hermes in prose? The prose poem in its French origins was more descriptive than narrative, but Herbert's prose poems, true to his iron adherence to story, are like Kafkaesque parables, leavened, as here, with dark humor. They reflect his interest in politics more directly than his lyrics: see the sting in the tail, indicting the reader, of "Emperor," a poem about a totalitarian ruler:

> Once upon a time there was an Emperor. He had yellow eyes and a predatory jaw. He lived in a palace full of statuary and policemen. Alone. At night he would wake up and scream. Nobody loved him. Most of all he liked hunting game and terror. But he posed for photographs with children and flowers. When he died, nobody dared to remove his portraits. Take a look, perhaps still you have his mask at home.

Into this frame, insert your chosen dictator—Caligula, Hitler, Stalin. One plot fits all.

It is in *Hermes, Dog and Star* that we find Herbert's famous ars poetica, "A Knocker," which defends a principled moral judgment unwilling to compromise with expediency. Condemning those poets who "grow gardens in their heads" from which facile "schools of images stream down," Herbert proclaims:

> my imagination
> is a piece of board
> my sole instrument
> is a wooden stick
>
> I strike the board
> it answers me
> yes—yes
> no—no

A poetry restricted to such antithetical extremes, with no room for a middle ground between "yes" and "no," wrings historical circumstance until it forcibly aligns all phenomena under either God or mammon. And it wrings language dry:

> I thump on the board
> and it prompts me
> with the moralist's dry poem
> yes—yes
> no—no

Even "yes" and "no," however, are mortal. In "Episode in a Library," Herbert admits the ultimate unintelligibility of poetry after the passage of time by recounting the death of a young poet:

> When we carried him off under fire, I believed his still warm body would be resurrected in the word. Now I see words dying, I know that there is no limit to decay. What will remain after us are fragments of words scattered on the black earth. Accent signs over nothingness and ash.

From the earthly paradise of Arden to a hoped-for companionship at Apocalypse with animal or celestial body, and thence to a wooden annunciation of principle by curt assent or determined refusal, Herbert has arrived at the extinction of the word. Herbert's poems henceforth issue from this pit of bleak knowledge—that hope does not last, that words do not last. Is there an ars poetica of nothingness?

The excellent title sequence of *Study of the Object*, from 1961, announces Herbert's decision to turn his gaze away from introspection. We might expect that he will fix his gaze on the material world; but having seen its transience, he creates instead a virtual world modeled by a negation of the material one:

> The most beautiful is the object
> which does not exist…
>
> neither
> blindness
> nor
> death
> can take away the object
> which does not exist

The exaggeration above, in which the poem, for four lines, utters itself single word by single word, suggests the last gasps of a dying mouth. Now even the object which does not exist vanishes, replaced by its tomb marker, a black square:

> mark the place
> where stood the object
> which does not exist
> with a black square

Even the black square, in this relentless ascesis, must disappear. The sequence continues:

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now you have
empty space
more beautiful than the object
more beautiful than the place it leaves
it is the pre-world
a white paradise
of all possibilities

From the extinction of a material object to the creation of a virtual object to a black square obliterating the virtual object to empty space to a white pre-world paradise in which (the poet tells us) the ruthless axes of description are perpendicular lightning and a naked horizon—such is the narrative of Herbert's eviscerating imagination, as it exerts itself against the impermanence of all material things.

In "Pebble," the poet forsakes the immaterial mental world of traditional lyric for a material world pregnant with virtual possibility. That is, the poet allows the material of the world to become fully symbolic "by itself," without interference by human agency. The ars poetica that Herbert now offers is that of a virtual possible pebble, a pre-existing Platonic idea, as hard and smooth as a real pebble. It would be contaminated by being assigned a symbolic meaning by human choice, would be wronged by any imposition of human "warmth":

The pebble
is a perfect creature

equal to itself
mindful of its limits

filled exactly
with a pebbly meaning

with a scent which does not remind one
of anything
does not frighten anything away does
not arouse desire

its ardor and coldness
are just and full of dignity

I feel a heavy remorse
when I hold it in my hand
and its noble body
is permeated by false warmth

—Pebbles cannot be tamed
to the end they will look at us
with a calm and very clear eye

The poetics of reduction leads to this majestic dead-end of the de-symbolized symbol, a wish for the extinction of subjectivity. Repudiating nostalgia, fear, and desire, the poem announces a cold ardor, dignified and reticent. (Yet even this minimalism has to remind us, on its way to stoniness, of the fractious human presence of memory, fear, desire, remorse, and oppression.) The "calm and very clear eye" of the pebble represents Herbert's vow to write an "objective" poetry of detached notation. The presiding god in *Study of the Object* is "the god of irony" whom "the barbarians" attempt to crush; the artist, to mirror the real, must spend his days "correcting the world" that God so inhumanly made perfect; "mr artist / builds a world / not from atoms / but from remnants." (The translator keeps to the British practice of using no period after the abbreviation Mr.)

It is in *Study of the Object* (1961) that Herbert unveils the Shakespearean poem "Elegy of Fortinbras," in which the newly arrived Fortinbras dismisses, with regret, the newly dead Hamlet. Dedicated to Czesław Miłosz, the poem is an exquisitely balanced stand-off between the pragmatic ruler who sits, watches, and carries out social reform, and the tragic prince who "believed in crystal notions." Fortinbras concludes his elegy:

I go to my affairs This night is born
a star named Hamlet We shall never
meet
what I shall leave will not be worth a
tragedy

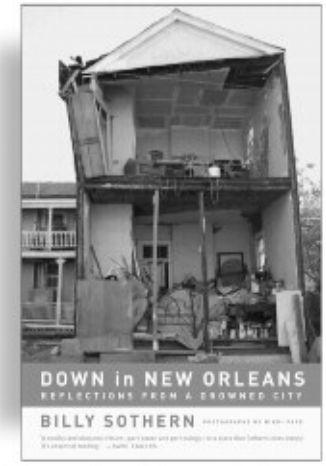
It is not for us to greet each other or bid
farewell we live on archipelagos
and that water these words what can
they do what can they do prince

Herbert's rigidity of "yes—yes / no—no" bends a little here, as he criticizes both Hamlet and Fortinbras, and concedes the perpetual presence in the world of both temperaments. Fortinbras is not the martyr but the survivor, rather like Herbert himself in his undeviating observation of the world, blaming Hamlet for having chosen "the easier part":

you chose the easier part an elegant
thrust
but what is heroic death compared with
eternal watching
with a cold apple in one's hand on a
narrow chair
with a view of the ant-hill and the
clock's dial

The "narrow chair," Fortinbras's observation post, had been constructed earlier in the title poem, "Study of the Object":

"A deeply soulful and eloquent tribute.... Essential reading."
—Dave Eggers



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BY BILLY SOTHERN
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extract
from the shadow of the object
which does not exist
from polar space
from the stern reveries of the inner eye
a chair…

we ask reveal o chair
the depths of the inner eye
the iris of necessity
the pupil of death

Attempting to pull himself back from the remote and icy "pupil of death" belonging to the inner eye of poetry when it contemplates necessity, desiring to restore himself to the human world, Herbert creates, in *Study of the Object*, another poem of opposites, "Apollo and Marsyas." Here the antagonists are not the chilly observer and the tragic idealist (both, of course, aspects of Herbert himself), but rather a cruelly perfect divine singer and a tortured satyr howling in agony. Apollo has just flayed the satyr Marsyas, who had dared to compete in song with the god. Herbert's revision of Ovid describes Apollo's disgust at Marsyas's "music":

shaken by a shudder of disgust
Apollo is cleaning his instrument

only seemingly
is the voice of Marsyas
monotonous
and composed of a single vowel
A

in reality
Marsyas relates
the inexhaustible wealth
of his body

bald mountains of liver
white ravines of aliment
rustling forests of lung
sweet hillocks of muscle
joints bile blood and shudders

Apollo departs wondering prophetically "whether out of Marsyas' howling / there will not some day arise / a new kind / of art." As the god leaves, "suddenly / at his feet / falls a petrified nightingale." The era of the melodious nightingale has ended: the era of the groaning body has begun. This fable of suffering is, it would seem, an advance on the de-symbolized pebble, since in it Herbert returns to the human plane. The two clashing impulses—superb Apollonian classicism versus mortal outrage—continue to contest each other to the end of Herbert's life. Here the poet's sympathy lies more with Marsyas than with the contemptuous Apollo, but Herbert is later able to admit, if reluctantly, his own Apollonian loyalties.

Readers interested in another modern redaction of the Ovidian contest should see James Merrill's admirable "Marsyas," spoken by the satyr, who was satisfied with his own mediocre thematic verse until he was judged by Apollo to be a betrayer of poetry. In Apollo's music Marsyas suddenly hears the real thing, "the plucked nerve's elemental twang." He is found later, flayed, as Apollo's divine music dominates the atmosphere:

They found me dangling where his
golden wind
Inflicted so much music on the lyre
That no one could have told you
what he sang.

It is precisely the subordination of content to the aesthetic imperative that Herbert, scarred by war, cannot bear.

Herbert's next volume, *Inscription* (1969), bears the dedication "In Memory of My Father." This intimate family death perhaps countered Herbert's intolerable memories of violent and senseless murders under two totalitarian regimes. There is no poem with the title "Inscription," but the word itself appears in "Prologue," which opens with the plaintive question of an orphaned musician-poet: "To whom do I play?" Everyone is dead, and all that the speaker can offer to the victims is a military funeral under an apocalyptic sunset:

A final drumroll played by shells
in the courtyard simple obsequies
two crossed planks a riddled helmet
and a great rose of fire in the skies

A chorus, in antiphonal response to the speaker, observes that in spite of the deaths so searing to him, human life continues undisturbed ("In the oven brown bread swells") and the natural world indifferently continues its production:

There is only earth. One earth and over
it pass the seasons of the year.
Wars of insects and of people then
quick death over a honey flower.
Grain will ripen. Oaks will blossom.
Rivers go from mountain to sea.

The speaker of "Prologue" is nonetheless permitted his last word, one of mourning for the dead and love for them and for his native soil:

A desolate place
but overhead the air still trembles
with their voices.

. . .

The trench where a turbid river runs
I call the Vistula. Hard to confess:
this is the love that we are doomed to
this is the homeland that pierces us

"The love that we are doomed to" loosens the earlier forcible repression of the agonies of war and occupation that had produced Herbert's vow to be a silent pebble of objective gaze. Although now admitting love and desolation, he still despises a poetry of self-pity. In "Why the Classics," he recalls with approval Thucydides's stoical refusal to exonerate himself after his failure to reach the Greek colony of Amphipolis in time to prevent its fall, a failure punished by lifelong exile ("exiles of all times / know what price that is"). "Why the Classics," after praising Thucydides's reticence, prophesies a dingy end for a modern poetry of self-pity:

if art for its subject
will have a broken jar
a small broken soul
with a great self-pity

what will remain after us
will be like lovers' weeping
in a small dirty hotel
when wallpaper dawns

What sort of poetry can a lyric poet write if he is to forgo a stony pebble-gaze and yet not sink into narcissistic elegy? It was to solve this problem that Herbert invented a surrogate self—ironic, comic, philosophical—who appears in most of the poems in *Mr Cogito*, the remarkable volume that appeared in 1974. Mr Cogito is a hybrid of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza; his divided mind is manifest in his two uneven legs, one normal, one scarred, the ordinary left leg "given to leaps / balletic," while the scarred right leg is "nobly rigid":

and so
on both legs
the left comparable to Sancho Panza
and the right
calling to mind the wandering knight
Mr Cogito
goes
through the world
staggering slightly

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In his youth Herbert was drawn to the abstract and the symbolic, and had thought of becoming a philosopher; he conducted a long correspondence with the philosopher Henryk Elzenberg of the University of Toruń, whose private seminars he attended (and for whom he wrote a grateful elegy). Adam Zagajewski remarks, in his introduction to the *Collected Poems*, that Herbert was "not entirely sure whether he should become a philosopher or a poet, demanding emotion in philosophy and ideas in poetry." Herbert himself, in his final volume, as he contemplates the destructions brought about by "progress," wonders whether it would not be better "to stick / with the wisdom / of old mountain folk, thereby gaining "the lucid knowledge / that all philosophy / is superfluous / and even harmful." Mr Cogito is a cartoon version of a philosopher, whimsical rather than logical, epigrammatic rather than expository. Though his presence falls off in subsequent collections, he was so congenial to Herbert that he never died, accompanying the poet through his last poems. He enabled Herbert to jest with philosophy while being philosophical, to be something of a comic automaton while retaining the savor of humanity.

Mr Cogito's difference from an actual philosopher can be seen in "Mr Cogito Reads the Newspaper." Contemplating his morning ritual, Mr Cogito meditates satirically on how much more interested he is in an anecdote of the "quotidian macabre" (a farmworker murdering his wife and children) than he is in the death of 120 soldiers:

> it's no use trying to find
> 120 lost men on a map
> a distance too remote
> hides them like a jungle
>
> they don't speak to the imagination
> there are too many of them
> the numeral zero on the end
> turns them into an abstraction
>
> a theme for further reflection:
> the arithmetic of compassion

It is characteristic of Mr Cogito's philosophical practice first to put the concrete case—two newspaper stories, one of heaped death, another of precise death—and only then announce the philosophical "theme for further reflection." It is only after he cites two news stories that he begins to reflect on "the arithmetic of compassion." The "real" philosopher, by contrast, tends first to think of an abstract issue—say, how to choose among competing goods—and afterward invent an allegorical anecdote to embody it. ("By pushing a button, you can derail the train and save the child on the tracks, but thirty people will die in the train wreck: do you push the button?") The anecdotes of the philosophers are confected and unreal; the anecdotes of Mr Cogito are found and real. They precede thought, whereas philosophical anecdotes follow thought.

Unlike the philosophers, Mr Cogito has no faith in the supposed restless questing of thoughts toward a solution:

> Thoughts cross the mind
> a common idiom has it
>
> the common idiom
> overestimates thoughts' mobility
>
> a majority of them
> stand motionless
> in a dull landscape
> of bleak hillocks
> and withered trees . . .
>
> they don't cross
> because they won't get anywhere
> they don't cross
> because there's nowhere to get to

In spite of its wry domestication of thought's potential journeys, the poem remains philosophical because it has begun in quasi-Wittgensteinian reflection on "a common idiom": "A thought just crossed my mind." Herbert wittily interrogates our more complacent uses of language through the "simple" reflections of his surrogate.

As the acute sufferings of his wounded past recede, Herbert, in the person of Mr Cogito, can even repudiate his earlier identification with Marsyas, the flayed martyr of the human howl. At a pop concert, Mr Cogito contemplates "the aesthetics of noise," which he finds at first "an idea in itself / quite appealing." Such an aesthetic can "drag from guts / what's in the guts / terror and hunger," can "lay bare the paths of intestines," can "play mad love songs / on a red throat." We hear in these lines an echo of Marsyas's music of the body's organs and blood. But "Mr Cogito and Pop" appends a corrective second part to its first sympathetic thoughts on the aesthetic of noise:

> the trouble is
> that a cry eludes form
> is poorer than a voice
> which rises and falls
>
> a cry touches silence
> but by way of hoarseness
> not by way of the desire
> to describe silence
>
> its darkness blazes
> with inarticulacy
>
> it rejected the grace of humor
> because it knows no half-tones

Marsyas's howl did not, could not, exhibit "the grace of humor": unmediated agony knows no half-tones. It may be that in a time of mass murder only Marsyas's voice is available to the poet, but there is no warrant for its continued presence in violent and simplistic pop music. Herbert has learned, especially by inventing Mr Cogito, a new corrective subtlety in which satire, humor, and reflection yield a volatile distillation.

Mr Cogito continues his adventures in *Report from a Besieged City*, in 1983. I will come shortly to the title poem, but I begin with Herbert's most thematically revealing poem, "Mr Cogito and the Imagination." In it, Herbert, now almost sixty, lists those things that Mr Cogito "longed to understand fully." (I give the poetic list, annotating it with conventional abstractions paralleling Mr Cogito's concretions.) Mr Cogito yearns to understand the following:

> —Pascal's night (theology)
> —the nature of a diamond (science)
> —the prophets' melancholy (the tragic imagination)
> —the wrath of Achilles ("noble" or righteous anger)
> —the fury of mass murderers (human savagery)
> —the dreams of Mary Stuart (fantasies of a happy ending)
> —the fear of Neanderthals (primitive terror)
> —the last Aztecs' despair (emotion at the end of a culture)
> —Nietzsche's long dying (madness)
> —the Lascaux painter's joy (original creative exaltation)
> —the rise and fall of an oak (natural cycles)
> —the rise and fall of Rome (the creation and collapse of empire)

Nowhere is Herbert's innate preference for the living instance over the philosophical category more clearly visible than here. The unpredictable sequencing of the list (from an oak to Rome) and its vivid population (from Pascal to the

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Neanderthals) bestow a convincing idiosyncrasy, unavailable within abstract categories, on Herbert's intellectual longings. The poem provokes the reader not only to classify Mr Cogito's imaginative excursions but also to imagine his own.

The most famous poem in *Report from a Besieged City* forsakes the single-person surrogate Mr Cogito so that Herbert can speak in the collective voice of the dissident artists of his era. "The Power of Taste," a "philosophical" poem requiring more lines, and longer ones, than Herbert's short poems of impersonal observation, marvelously ascribes the poet's dissidence from the communist state to aesthetic revulsion at its vulgarity:

> It did not take any great character
> our refusal dissent and persistence
> we had a scrap of necessary courage
> but essentially it was a matter of taste
> Yes taste
> which has fibers of soul and the gristle
> of conscience. . .
>
> Truly their rhetoric was just too shoddy
> (Marcus Tullius turned in his grave)
> chains of tautologies a few flailing
> concepts
> torturers' dialectics reasoning
> without grace
> syntax devoid of the beauty of the
> subjunctive

This account exhibits a buoyant satirical spirit, but also more than a grain of truth. "The Power of Taste" wears better, I think (at least in English), than the celebrated title poem of *Report from a Besieged City.*

"Report from a Besieged City," with its fifty-nine broad and complicated lines, may be impossible to render adequately in English. It begins promisingly as its speaker declares his vocation as chronicler:

> Too old to carry arms and fight like
> the others—
>
> I was mercifully given the supporting
> role of a chronicler
> I write down—not knowing for whom—
> a siege's history.

But the fifty-line history becomes repetitive and (eventually) sentimental, as the speaker says of the City's unscathed allies, "they have not lived through a siege long as an eternity," and then contrasts them with those who fight on the losing side, saying:

> they who are touched by misfortune
> are always alone
> defenders of the Dalai Lama the Kurds
> and the Afghans

The ending must retrieve the poem from this sort of complaint, and it does so by stressing not adversity but courage, not humiliated hopes but resilient dreams:

> cemeteries are growing the number of
> defenders shrinking
> but the defense continues and it will
> continue to the end
>
> and if the City falls and one man
> survives
> he will carry the City inside him on the
> paths of exile
> he will be the City
>
> we look into hunger's face the face of
> fire face of death
> the worst of all—the face of betrayal
>
> and only our dreams have not been
> humiliated

Sentimentality is so far from Herbert's temperamental ethos that it makes only brief appearances, but when it does gain ground it mars the poem. And it tends to appear more frequently in his last three volumes—*Elegy for the Departure, Rovigo,* and *Epilogue to a Storm*—in which Herbert succumbs (or so it seems to me) to various grandstanding temptations: to give prophetic instruction (in "Journey," echoing Cavafy's "Ithaca"), to pray ("Prayer of Old Men"), and to denounce ("Portrait of the Fin de Siècle").

The title poem of *Elegy for the Departure* (1990), comes as a surprise: the poet is speaking not of his own departure, but of the departure of his original forms of writing and reading. The full title is "Elegy for the Departure of Pen Ink and Lamp":

> O silver nib…
> O ink…
> Light of my childhood
> blessed lamp

As the child-that-was hails the "luminous initiation" into Shakespeare that the lamp made possible, he remembers too that the lamp revealed to him, as it shone its light down on the page, "the theater of the world / knotted / evil / cruel." "Elegy for the Departure" is a tender poem, less riven by drama than its great companion in this volume, the ambitious sequence "Mr Cogito's Adventures with Music." Music, the art of pure sound—constructing a complex syntax without ideation and without judgment—torments Herbert the moralist. Mr Cogito seems close, here, to the actual Zbigniew Herbert, as he confesses "the hungers [for music] of his university years,"

> more piercing than hunger for food
> when he waited before the concert
> for the divine grace of a free ticket

But with his further experience of wartime sadistic violence, Mr Cogito finds doubts and scruples creeping in: the masters of music have not changed, but "the orbit of things / was what changed… /and with it / Mr Cogito's / inner axis." Not only can he no longer "step into the river / of his former joy," he begins "to hoard arguments against music." We are back to the contest between Apollo and Marsyas, as the ravaged poet begins to hate the indifference of music to morals, and wants to throw "over her bright face / a hood of anathema," saying vengefully, "the Etruscans flogged slaves / to the accompaniment of pipes and flutes." Although Mr Cogito attempts a premature resolution by announcing of music that "she is therefore / morally neutral / like the sides of a triangle," his disquiet returns: although he "suspends without answer / his reflections on the nature of music," she gives him no peace: he struggles against

> the impetus with which
> she invades our interior
>
> saddens without reason
> gladdens without cause. . .
>
> absolves too easily
> purges for nothing

But the moralistic denouncer, reduced to the monotony of his knocker, is a secret worshipper:

> Mr Cogito
> doomed to stony speech
> to hoarse syllables
> secretly worships
> transient lightness
>
> carnival isles and groves
> beyond good and evil

The meditation on music as a neutral or amoral art ends inconclusively, with Mr Cogito leaving behind his "dreams of the tongues of angels" in favor of "the trial of true and false / . . . the trial of fire and water." We are back to the "yes—yes / no—no" of moral decision, with music

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consigned to an ethereal realm hardly relevant to earthly life. It was brave of Herbert to wrestle once again with the angel Apollo, and brave of him to "suspend without answer" the philosophical puzzle of this tormenting and beautiful example of meaningless meaning.

As Herbert enlists himself further in the service of judgment, the aesthetic recedes in favor of the human, as we see in the title poem of *Rovigo*, in 1992, describing an undistinguished town in Italy through which Herbert passed more than once when he was pursuing art in the museums of Padua and Ferrara and Florence. But is any town, even if ugly, less vivid than any other? the poet asks. Rovigo was, after all, "a city of blood and stone like others / a city where a man died yesterday someone went mad / someone coughed hopelessly all night." Death, madness, and illness have risen to a point in Herbert's consciousness where they loom larger than art or architecture. Marsyas wins this time, although Apollo will (apparently) win six years later in a poem praising Miłosz. As the great poet writes in Olympian solitude high above San Francisco Bay, as disciplined as a monk in a scriptorium, he is celestially rewarded:

Angels descend from heaven
Alleluia
when he sets down
his slanted
azure-spaced
letters

There is no title poem as such for Herbert's posthumously published final volume, *Epilogue to a Storm*. The storm was Herbert's fatal illness, and it is in "Stake" that we see the word "storm" appear. "Stake" is a terrifying poem in which the poet is a creature hammered to a stake and ceaselessly battered by a "maelstrom of pain," by "cramps cold shivers nausea /and howling." The storm itself is "attacking with heavy artillery," and although the moment of *sauve qui peut* has arrived, the agonized tethered body cannot escape. I quote the whole of this harrowing poem in which Apollo has disappeared entirely and only Marsyas remains:

I don't know who (who the hell)
this storm of pain is attacking
with heavy artillery every inch of air
of ground is torn up turned inside out
leveled by previous attacks why then
this maelstrom of pain if it is a signal
and pain a signal sent to headquarters
when all run dropping last orders for
destruction
as they go why then cramps cold
shivers nausea
the howling under a low dark sky
why the hammering to the stake

It is hardly credible that a body so undone as Herbert's then was could summon up the concentration of mind to write such a poem. "Stake" offers an exemplary display of Herbert's most fertile method of description—the assemblage of multiple nouns or verbs into a single complex, creating an arrangement of rays traveling out from a center. The phrase "every inch," for instance, generates two rays of location ("of air / of ground); "is" generates three rays of participial destruction ("is torn up turned inside out / leveled"); "why then" generates four rays of malaise ("cramps cold shivers nausea / the howling") and the last sonic scream is alliteratively matched by its lethal cause: "[why] the howling … / why the hammering." "Stake" gives the impression of being revised in space and time even as it is being written: the artillery is tearing up the air, but it is also turning the ground inside out, ground that had earlier been leveled. The poem is also revised as it carries out its rapid inventory of its sensations: cramps, yes, but cold shivers at the same moment, and accompanying these with no lapse in time is nausea, while a howl escapes from the hammered creature. A reader's brain, as it attempts to incorporate such a plurality of reactions at every instant, feels in itself Herbert's rays splitting and forking, heaping up and undoing.

Although it is the weakest of Herbert's mature volumes, *Epilogue to a Storm*—to that storm of final pain—is distinguished by the mere presence of "Stake." The storm died down with Herbert's death, the epilogue was published, the poet's cry no longer existed except on the page. Herbert's voice had been shaken, in the later volumes, by the uncertain future of poetry, the possible disappearance of its power to articulate and contain and ameliorate wretchedness. Reading that Hirohito had composed a tanka "for the yearly / traditional poetry competition," Herbert wondered, in "Wagon" (1990), if the practice would perish with the centenarian emperor:

I wonder
with an aching heart
what will be the fate
of traditional poetry

will it pass away
after the emperor's shadow

perishable
negligible

The arithmetic of the tanka ("five verse lines / thirty-one syllables") pleases Herbert's strictness of temperament. But those things that enabled in prewar Europe a comparable formality—the classical and modern languages of the *gymnasium*, the Mass and Latin hymns, the architectural precision of Piero della Francesca, the music of Bach—were fast disappearing in postwar chaos, as they became culturally perishable and ideologically negligible. Herbert's final view was a grieving one, at least in the poetry. In life, as is apparent in a late interview, he had become outspokenly truculent, alienating even friends.

His rigidity of temperament, that incapacity for seeing the grays that run between black and white, recalls Hopkins's similar moral reductions of life, in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," to "black, white; right, wrong." Such temperaments perplex and disturb ones of more sensual breadth and more flexible self-forgiveness. It was Herbert's good fortune, aesthetically speaking, to live in a culture repellent enough to justify the severity of his judgment. Had he been born into ease and approval, would his talent for reduction have appeared irrational in its austerity? Would he still have had an appetite for the correction of dreams by chronicles? Would he have imagined his hard pebble-like narratives?

He said of himself, in "Dream Language,"

I suspect that
we all dream in images
but I spin
all these crazy yarns
as if sleeping
in a mound
of narrative

That is Herbert's crisp analysis of the struggle in his art between the chronicle and the dream, the life anecdote and the lyric meditation. If Apollo bestows the images of dream, Marsyas is the clamorous voice of narrative, insisting on telling his story, if only in a howl, a single vowel from a red throat. Herbert's intellectual acuteness ensured that he only rarely deceived himself about the duty that he owed to each half of his quarreling nature. ◆

ANTHONY RUSSO

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Christine Stansell

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN

THE DIANA CHRONICLES
By Tina Brown
(Doubleday, 560 pp., $27.50)

How often does summer reading disappoint? Usually you are immune to the shill of the bestseller list, but now it's hot and you deserve some fun, too. And so you shell out the thirty bucks for what the bookstores are hawking on their buzzy front tables—but then the thriller peters out into preposterousness, and you become guiltily bored with the book on Iraq, and you bog down in the Big Novel's glut of detail. So it is all the more delicious to report that *The Diana Chronicles* is that contradiction in terms: a summer spellbinder for serious people. Its pleasures are owed to more than its sensational subject. (Sensation *is* its subject.) They come also from seeing a fine mind take a severely limited theme and create out of it an acutely observed portrait of manners and mores, love and folly.

Brown was known in her years at *Vanity Fair* and *The New Yorker* for journalism with energy and bite, but the pieces never quite floated clear of the higher gossip. Now, with space to stretch her talents, she turns what could have been only a stylish rehash of the same old story into a study of a society and a culture—specifically, of British society and the culture of celebrity in the 1980s and 1990s, a turning point that the Princess of Wales did much to bring about. In placing the affecting (and in many ways absurd) coming-of-age story of this naïve young woman in its full historical context, *The Diana Chronicles* is much more than a celebrity biography: it is a superb cultural history of the transformation of the British upper classes in the last quarter of the last century.

It was ten years ago this month that a car crash in Paris killed Diana and her companion Dodi Fayed. The torrent of mourning that the death occasioned, primarily in Britain but also around the world, now seems almost quaint, an old-fashioned outpouring of emotion in those pre–9/11 days when Anglo-American psychological reserves were so high that people could afford to fling away feeling on small public provocations—outrage at a president who cheated on his wife, grief for a royal celebrity who died in a drunk-driving accident. *The Diana Chronicles* opens with the fatal night, setting up the book as something of a thinking person's whodunit. But the mystery Brown sets in motion is not about who was responsible: she has no truck with the conspiracy theories about the disaster. Brown wants to know, instead, how it was that Diana came to be in that car, with that man, and with that driver on that August night in Paris. To answer these questions, she embarks upon an investigation of how larger social forces and individual personalities connived in the woman's fate.

Diana Spencer was born in 1961 into one of England's oldest aristocratic families. The Spencers had a centuries-old pedigree—older than the Windsors, whose line did not arrive from Germany until the 1700s. In their grandest days, the Spencers were known for high living, endless glamour, and prodigious wealth. By Diana's time, however, much of the splendor had receded. But her father, Johnnie Spencer—charming, handsome, and in line for the title—was still one of the great catches of London in the early 1950s. His marriage to her mother, Frances Fermoy, was essentially engineered by Frances's mother, the socially ambitious and scheming Lady Ruth Fermoy, whose passion in life was to marry off her daughters to great families—never mind the men. Inside the debonair man-about-town, Johnnie Spencer was melancholy and emotionally thwarted, and tyrannized by an eccentric, despotic father. But who knew, and in any case, who cared: Lady Ruth had no interest in matters such as emotional suitability. Companionate marriage, the hallmark of family relations in the modern West, had not yet made it into the British aristocracy in the 1950s, and the marriage market was as vicious and venal as the one that Mary Wollstonecraft excoriated in 1792 in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Brown encapsulates the historical moment nicely: "The drive for upper-class women in the fifties and early sixties to land a titled husband, preferably one with an estate, was a cutthroat business managed with quiet, heartless tenacity by their mothers."

The marriage was predictably unhappy, and it was dissolved when Diana was six. Her mother left to marry a jolly, unpretentious commoner who was the heir to a wallpaper fortune. Ruth Fermoy, appalled that her daughter had thrown away a title, colluded with Johnnie Spencer to do her out of the custody of the children. Frances succeeded in escaping the emotionally parsimonious marriage into which her mother had pushed her when she was seventeen, but in leaving she lost any chance she might have had to save her teenage daughter from a worse version of the same thing. When Diana rapturously accepted Charles's offhanded proposal, she was too young, too inexperienced, and too out of touch with her mother to perceive that she was entering the same kind of marriage that had nearly done her mother in.

What is surprising about Brown's opening chapters is how little World War II changed the expectations and the sensibilities of upper-class British women. They were still trudging along in the same round of balls, races, male sporting events, and meals—each requiring a change of clothes—that their grandmothers had soldiered through. The royals, who anchored the entire system, were flying high. The Windsors' comportment during the Blitz had rallied the British public around them and put to rest the lingering scandal of Edward VIII's abdication for the American divorcée (although it still lurked in the family memories, one reason why Prince Charles's dalliance with Camilla Parker Bowles could not be tolerated indefinitely). Coronation Year in 1953 took the public by storm and heightened the royalist romance. The young Elizabeth was beautiful, and the spectacle of "the glowing, serious, self-possessed young Queen … waltzing in iridescent satin with Prince Phillip" enchanted the nation. The press essentially worked as a media outlet of Buckingham Palace, a kind of Fox TV for royals. It was unimaginable that they would publish anything critical, and so the Windsors and their retinue swanned around London confident that no secrets would be exposed, no dirty linen aired. So intense was the adulation that when a Tory historian suggested in an obscure venue that the queen was too attached to the upper classes, a peer called for his execution for treason and someone slapped him in the street.

By the time Diana Spencer came on the scene, all this had drastically changed. The culture of deference had begun to crumble around the restless Princess

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Margaret, whose romances with several commoners, conducted in the photogenic regions of café society (she finally married one of the chic photographers), "moved the Royal Family decisively from regal seclusion toward showbiz availability." Rupert Murdoch's arrival in London in 1969 put the tabloids on steroids. Over the next decade, the jaundiced, no-holds-barred exposé ethos that he promoted blended with the malaise of the era—what Brown remembers from her years at Oxford in the late 1970s as everyone's "sarcastic embracing of national decline," a Monty Pythonesque caustic mockery of a moribund elite and "a sclerotic social-welfarism that had lost its way."

And yet Diana was formed by the earlier era. This woman who became a symbol of her day began as an anachronism. Brown has a historian's skill at organizing details into a chronological frame, and she sees Diana Spencer's pathetic teenage ambitions as formed by a class and gender system that barred upper-class girls from the improvements in their life prospects that middle-class girls had been experiencing in fits and starts since World War II. Despite having grown up in the 1960s, when the rules had loosened enough for women such as her mother to have affairs and find better husbands, Diana's horizons were almost as low as Frances's had been when she was a girl. She did not travel or read books (except for the billowy romances of Barbara Cartland, in which the shy heroine always gets the manly prince). At home she never met artists or intellectuals or politicians, or heard the world's or the nation's affairs discussed with any seriousness. Quite incredibly, in the 1970s she received a slightly updated version of the same ladies' finishing school education that women reformers had been denouncing since—here is Mary Wollstonecraft again—the eighteenth century as hopelessly feminine, class-bound, and provincial.

Such a life did not prepare a girl for university—that was for their brothers, Brown notes, even though middle-class girls had been going to university, including Oxford and Cambridge, for nearly a century. On graduating from boarding school, teenagers with titles went to London to take tiny jobs while they waited for husbands to come along. The one serious gift that Diana developed at school was a remarkable ability to work with suffering and distressed people—the poor, the sick—in charity settings. But it would have been unthinkable for her to consider a career in social work.

Nor, when she went to London, did she work as a publisher's intern or an art gallery receptionist or a charity fundraiser—rich girls' jobs a generation later. She found employment instead as an au pair and an elevated cleaning lady. She was, Brown observes, "a Trust Fund Cinderella, drifting through temporary work—low-stress, undemanding jobs that drew on her agreeable demeanor." Menial work had cachet in these circles: it showed that you cared nothing about money or real work. If you wondered, when you first read about the Prince of Wales's fiancée, what in the world she was doing working as a kindergarten teacher, well, it turns out that this was not a starter job, but the height of Diana's professional ambitions at a time when British girls born far from the manor were preparing for medical school or careers in business.

Diana had a different aspiration. It was to marry a prince. Really, she planned to marry Prince Charles. She met the man when she was still a child, in passing, but Barbara Cartland's romances, in league with her culture, convinced her that marrying a prince was a golden vocation. The challenge was to hold on to her virginity, an essential occupational qualification. It wasn't easy. The one thing that had changed in Diana's milieu since her mother's adolescence was an acceptance of premarital and extramarital sex for girls. Charles himself was enjoying the loosened sexual ambience of the 1970s, sleeping his way through scores of one-night stands, girlfriends, and wives of wealthy chums. "All through the seventies," Brown writes, "Charles supplemented bachelor girls and bimbos with a willing cadre of married women. Their husbands rolled over for the same reasons their wives did, not *droit du seigneur*, but something at once medieval and modern: status."

But the prince's girlfriends were one thing and the girl he was to marry was another, chastity-wise. The press loved to tail Charles, hype the new prospect, and then unearth the secret that would disqualify her; more often than not, it was a sexual past. Diana Spencer knew the rules, and she was disciplined enough to keep herself "tidy" (her word). Indeed, she was one of the few titled girls of marriageable age in the voluptuary London of the 1970s to do so.

The older royals, especially the queen mother, were by the late 1970s unhappy about Charles's reluctance to marry. Anxiety turned into collective resolve to take action when his dalliance with Camilla Parker Bowles became a full-fledged affair in 1980, a torrid involvement—at least on his part—that he threw in the face of the public and his family. Brown thinks that Camilla was really in love with her husband, the eternally faithless Andrew Parker Bowles, and that she was dangling the prince so as to lure Andrew back. But Charles was passionately in love with this athletic, relaxed, and highly sexual woman—who also happened to be married. It was all too reminiscent of Edward VIII. And so the older royals and their retinue had to find a bride.

The field was sparse. By 1980, as Brown quips, virgins were mostly to be found on sitcoms. The queen mother and the queen picked out Diana Spencer because she had the right pedigree, and was a virgin, and was—with all respect to the dead—too dumb to say no. (Two previous candidates knew enough about the royal family and the life that awaited a princess in Buckingham Palace to demur.) And so Diana Spencer it was. The pair saw each other thirteen times before she floated down the aisle in her puffy-sleeved Cinderella gown with its thirty-foot train. (In the 1990s, when Diana's fashion taste ran to slinky elegance, she looked on the dress with embarrassment.) In the television footage shown obsessively around the world, everything was mesmerizing in its sumptuousness (she arrived in a glass horse-drawn coach), but I recall that even then the bride and the groom looked like the kind who, standing at the altar, provoke doubt among the wedding guests: she looked enraptured, he looked like his mind was somewhere else.

And it was. Apparently Charles had the decency to stop sleeping with Camilla for a time, but Camilla was still in on the deal, dropping Diana a coy little note congratulating her on the engagement: the note was dated two days before anyone was supposed to know the news, and ensured that Diana understood how knowledgeable Camilla was about Charles's comings and goings. The rest was for the world to see, and Diana soon made it her business to let the world see it. Her miseries began before the wedding, as she experienced the shock of massive media attention with virtually no one to help her. Eating disorders set in, and she was holed up in the confines of the palace, a place that "was tailor-made for a bulimic outburst. It is suffocating and empty at the same time, and everyone is trained to look the other way." (That observation is a fine example of the astuteness, the almost ethnographical precision, of Brown's eye.) What Diana wanted after the wedding, Brown judges kindly, was to settle in with the husband she barely knew, have sex and sleep late, and greet

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the family hand in hand. Instead she went to bed with a man who found her much-vaunted virginity boring and made his sexual indifference clear. With the family, Diana's plan was to use her talents for sympathy to bring everyone together—a feeble, doomed hope for people whose emotional stuntedness was their method of operation.

For a young woman who, Brown notes, actually had a few years' experience with some kind of life, as paltry as it was—watching television with her girlfriends, cooking dinner for the flatmates, dashing around London, going to work—the boredom and the loneliness were suffocating. The princess's job, she discovered, was to do nothing, nothing at all, except please her husband and, by extension, his family, and produce a male heir—and at the first two tasks she flopped from the start.

What made the story interesting, of course, was Diana's success in re-inventing herself in her dismal if luxurious circumstances. She might have become only a shrieking hysteric, a woman with "whims" (Brown observes that men in the palace had wishes and all women except for one had whims), the irritating sad-sack wife who did not fit in. Instead she grew up, more or less, and turned herself into a person of substance, more or less. At least Brown makes a persuasive case that she did.

It took time, though. And the process occurred by fits and starts. At first, she was nothing but angry: at her husband's continuing relationship with another woman, at the royals' coldness, at the torpid routine. Picked because she seemed so obliging, she proved to be a woman who could really kick up a fuss, and the noise, the broken china, and the tearstains made her unhappiness known: first to the palace staff and the family, and then to friends, and then to the press. Starved for conversation, she slipped downstairs to hang out with the help. Infuriated by Camilla's lingering presence, she pitched fits. Outsiders—meaning anyone who had not taken the royal pledge of *omertà*: ex-servants, reporters, hairstylists, friends of either spouse—talked about Charles and Diana's increasingly bitter and nasty fights. It was a tribute to her force, I suppose, that she managed to squeeze so much anger out of a man who cared for her so little.

But at some point Diana also made a bid for self-respect and independence. In part this came from doing her job and producing a male heir, and then another boy: she was, by all accounts, an absorbed and loving mother. (Brown counts it the tragedy of her life that she did not end up in the country with some nice man, four children, and ponies.) But her sense of adult identity was ironically derived in large part from a quasi-professional relationship with the media. Diana's beauty, her warmth with strangers, her preternatural ease with the camera, her evolving fashion sense: these were the resources from which she created the persona that beguiled the press and the public. It was not just that the royals had never expected this of the shy teenager whom they had conscripted; it was that none of them had accomplished such a thing. At least some of Charles's hostility, Brown argues, was owed to his feeling of rivalry: from very early on in their joint public appearances, Diana was the star and he was the morose sidekick.

Diana also found another role: the celebrity humanitarian. This vocation, which in our time has become a staple of popular culture and even of politics, she largely invented. She did this by using the capacities of media magnification that she learned to command. Film stars had been going around the world for UNICEF for some time, but Diana was much more serious in the causes that she chose and in the emotional aura that she emitted. In England, she turned the royals' dowdy do-gooding into philanthropy that was intelligent, practical, and focused on the needs of the victims rather than the generosity of the givers.

In the early 1980s, Brown reminds us, people held back from touching AIDS victims lest they be infected. In what was at the time a sensational act, Diana shook hands with patients in an AIDS ward, with no gloves on, before the cameras. In doing that she broke a taboo and challenged the fears that swirled around the disease. Had she been born much earlier, Brown speculates, she might have been a top-flight nurse in an army field hospital. A member of her entourage, describing a visit to an old-age home, recalled the stench of the squalor that greeted them as they walked into a room. Diana squared her shoulders and made her rounds, murmuring kindnesses to bedridden patients too sick even to recognize her.

In Africa, she took physical risks snaking her way along paths in land-mined areas, and almost single-handedly put the issue of land mines on the international agenda. She was not an analyst of any kind, and she was not in any of these causes for the long run, and so she did not completely break the mold of upper-class philanthropy. But she knew how to listen to people when they talked to her about their sorrows—a basic skill of humanitarian relief work that is usually in short supply. She sensed in herself some fatedness to provide companionship to sufferers, and surely this was a superior destiny to her fantasy of marrying a prince.

The divorce in 1996 freed her from the routine humiliations of being married to a man who loved another woman. Finally she was sprung from the palace. Determined to get a good settlement—partly because she had seen the terrible deal that Sarah Ferguson got in her divorce from Prince Andrew—she purged any shreds of the nice and pliant girl from her psyche and hired a smart and learned lawyer named Anthony Julius. He appears fleetingly in Brown's book, but he functions as one of the few moral reference points in the story. He insisted on a professional relationship, including payment. Julius did his job well, and Diana matched his efforts with her own great fortitude in resisting the royals' massive pressure. She walked away in 1996 with a fortune.

At thirty-five, she was rich, beautiful, and famous—and, while still "dumb as a plank" in her education, she was steely and knowledgeable in the ways of her

Simile

The way on green alluvial islands where the Zambezi meets the Cuando

the lions (cubs scanning smudged horizons as the father drops his snout in gore)
shake out a clump of vertebra and sinews in their teeth to extract the sweetest meat

so we might call it "merciless":
like that we rip reality from all the surfaces that flow

around us. And live in the amnesia of our doing it (I know I do) and so no end to war.
And hate it in ourselves and colonize our drives and swallow them and so we eat.

PETER CAMPION

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world. She imagined starting a documentary film/philanthropy venture, changing causes every two years. She outlined the idea over lunch with Tina Brown in New York a few months before her death, and it certainly tilted toward the lightweight end of humanitarian relief—yet it was real work, involving real people and real issues, and she had the media power that might have made it work. For Diana Spencer, certainly, it represented a radical departure: for the first time she was thinking about work in the world, which was the condition of the modern female identity that she had always been denied.

But like a Henry James heroine, she never escaped Europe. Being alone was liberating, but it also meant doing without many perquisites. Once again the brutal forces of women's history, long ago vanquished in middle-class life, bore down on her. In England she became a peripatetic pariah, as divorced women had been in the nineteenth century. No one with any connection to the Windsors wanted her around, lest her presence discredit them with the royals. She spurned the offer of a royal security detail because she believed that the palace employees would spy on her. So she was suddenly on her own, facing the same relentless hordes of reporters and paparazzi she once courted; and now she depended on them all the more to portray her as the people's princess, not as a lonely divorcée, a bereft single mother, or, worst of all, a washed-up royal adrift among fashion designers, hairstylists, and vacuous celebrities. The press, sensing her need, turned vicious; and her hysteria at being hounded made them all the madder to hound her. Friends recall paparazzi screaming "cunt" and "bitch" to get her to turn toward their cameras.

And she was still a captive of what Adrienne Rich long ago mordantly described as women's quintessential obsession: "love, our subject." Since marrying Charles, she had had affairs with men in her retinue, but she, the married one, was always in control. Now she was looking for a mate. She fell hopelessly in love with a Pakistani heart surgeon, a man who seems by all accounts to have been a good and credible person. She concocted a fantasy of how he would quit his job in London and join her in humanitarian aid as heart-surgeon-to-the-world, overcoming the objections of his orthodox Muslim family in the process. But the doctor could no more imagine a life trapped in front of the cameras than she could face a life as a doctor's wife. She made a pathetic attempt to charm the family back in Pakistan—on one humanitarian venture she managed to "drop by" their house, an act of ostentatiously casual informality which proves that the humiliating "pop-in" that the *Seinfeld* characters used to mock knows no boundaries of class. By the summer of 1997 the affair was over, and Diana was facing a summer alone.

But a summer alone was out of the question, and so she fell in with the Fayeds: the driven, multimillionaire Egyptian father who was in love with the British aristocracy, and the affable, clueless, coke-addicted Dodi. Dodi was actually engaged to a Calvin Klein model—the marriage was set for that August—but on Bastille Day the father, spying the golden opportunity of a princess at loose ends, ordered him to break it off and sicced him on Diana, sending the two off on a Mediterranean cruise on his yacht.

Diana did her best to ham it up for the press, posing in a swimsuit for the paparazzi, but far from being the glittering escapade that the media portrayed, it was a low moment. Her oldest son chided her for succumbing to the weirdly aggressive embrace of the playboy's ambitious father, who managed to sweep William and Henry away on a vacation with their mother on his estate in the South of France and acted like they were already members of the family. The boys returned to Balmoral, the queen's Scottish estate, which they adored and their mother loathed—and from which she was in any event excluded. But no invitations from any great British country houses were forthcoming, and she headed for Paris with Dodi, press in tow (goaded on by the father), still working on her new image as the gay divorcée.

On the night of August 31, the pair drifted aimlessly around. Brown's chronology has them leaving one place for another five times after 7 p.m. The paparazzi were fearsome and seductive: Diana was an old hand, even though she wanted a night off, and Dodi, the novice, was hungry for the limelight. The feeding frenzy increased because Fayed *père* stoked it with briefings to gossip columnists and a publicist spinning their summer holidays as the romance of the century. When they turned up at the Ritz (which Fayed owned), at that time of year a gathering place for tourists and South American prostitutes, Brown insists it can only be construed as playing to the media.

But then apparently they got tired and panicked. Dodi had an addict's lack of attention and judgment; shaking off his own detail, which had no way of avoiding the paparazzi hordes since he refused to tell them where he was going, he grabbed the head of security at the Ritz, who had already knocked down several pastis. The bodyguard neglected to make Diana put on her seatbelt. Shortly after they left the hotel, the press in hot pursuit, the drunk driver crashed the car in a tunnel under the Seine.

It is a lamentable tale—and yet the book is so much fun. Brown, a British expatriate in America, still has an insider's access in England, but her years in America have given her an outsider's edge. She has succeeded in writing a tale of the English aristocracy that is neither cartoonish nor Anglophilic—both occupational hazards of the American perspective—but somehow democratic. The egalitarian spirit of her book is born of equal measures of intelligence, sympathy, and irony. Her subjects can be howlingly foolish. But with an anthropologist's flair, Brown lays out their exotic displays of status, self-infatuated rituals ("Inter-Regimental Championship at the Tidworth Polo Club in Hampshire"), and silly names without superciliousness or moralism. She can tease out meaning from the most banal of texts: her analysis of Prince Charles's notorious "I wish I were a Tampax" confession to Camilla is a tour de force.

There is hardly a character with whom Brown does not sympathize—even the hapless Prince Charles, whom she rescues from his reputation as a dolt by pointing out that many of the ideas that were lampooned when he first broached them, such as strictly organic agriculture, have been subsequently vindicated. The queen did her best, with sparse emotional means, to behave decently to the troubled young woman whose expansive needs and aspirations, born of a different age, simply mystified her. Even the paparazzi come in for a measure of respect and empathy from this writer who knows first-hand the pressures of journalism: she understands their vulnerability to the ratcheted-up needs of their employers for sensational images. In one passage Brown sympathetically tosses off a characterization of a minor character as "a woman who had a complicated life, and understands that others do too." This can serve also as a fine description of the author of *The Diana Chronicles*, a consistently intelligent and empathic elaboration of the life of a preposterously famous woman, partly brave, partly silly, partly good. ◆

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Greenwich Diarist

Living Large

I was born big, issuing forth at nine pounds, 13-and-one-half ounces—nearly three pounds more than the average full-term Caucasian baby. I was pudgy as a kid and got called "Fatso" on occasion. When my mother took me to buy clothes at the old Desmond's men's store in Westwood Village, they measured me for "husky" sizes. There were lots of jokes from my parents' friends about what a great linebacker I'd make for UCLA.

If my weight at birth was determined, as I imagine it must have been, partly by genetic factors, there's no great mystery about why I grew up big. I have a large frame and obviously haven't been blessed with one of those just-throw-it-in-the-furnace-and-we'll-burn-it-up metabolisms that some of my friends apparently possess. But I'm big today mainly for one reason: because I eat a lot.

Cheese may well be my greatest culinary vice. I love it, all kinds of it, soft-ripe and hard, goat and sheep and cow, hand-crafted and occasionally even Kraft (in the form, for instance, of Texas queso). If I go a day without making its acquaintance in some form or other, I feel diminished. If I could give up cheese entirely, I'm firmly convinced that I'd drop 40 pounds in a year. But me giving up cheese is no more likely than me giving up alcohol.

Speaking of alcohol: I've moderated my intake somewhat in recent years, but there was a period during which I was truly a prodigious drinker. While visiting London back in the 1970s, for instance, I made this entry in my journal: "I went to bed quite drunk. . . . I computed that I had had, in this order: a glass of sherry, a half-bottle each of white and red wine, an armagnac, a cognac, a third of a bottle of red wine, a pint of lager, a brandy, another pint of lager, a one-third carafe of red wine, a sambucca, and a double cognac—all between about 1.30 p.m. and midnight."

Drinking didn't just add lots of calories to my diet—it also made the eating worse. I gained a lot of weight during my days at Ports, my regular hangout in West Hollywood in the 1980s, and not only from the watercress and cheese pie and the *albondigas en chipotle* (which came with a thick layer of melted cheese on top; I would always eat this first, then send the dish back to the kitchen for more). Often, in fact, I wouldn't eat at the restaurant at all—just drink. But I'd almost always drink for entirely too long and develop a raging alcoholic hunger, of the kind that can only be satisfied by protein and grease. To assuage it, I'd stop for tacos at the AstroBurger on the way home—or pull into the Boys supermarket and buy a bag each of tortilla chips and shredded sharp cheddar, then, at my place, make an immense plate of nachos, which I'd eat sitting up in bed.

Maybe if I had been more physically active, the effects of this behavior wouldn't have been so dire, but I've never been particularly athletic. I love tennis, and, in the late '70s and early '80s in L.A., I was on the courts at seven in the morning most weekdays—but, after I moved to Greenwich, Connecticut, in 1994, I pretty much gave it up. (There were fewer places to play, you had to use expensive indoor courts much of the year, and I simply had less time.) For a year or so in the late '90s, until work pressures intervened, I also took up fencing. And I'll deny this if you tell anybody, but, a few months ago, I began working out with a trainer a couple of times a week at the local health club. The best thing about this is that it gives me an excuse to go out afterwards and have a nice lunch.

It is my opinion that whoever said "Nothing tastes as good as thin feels" has probably never sat down with three ounces of Iranian osetra, a stack of freshly made *blinis* (the kind that aren't made with pancake mix), a small bone spoon, and nobody else in the room; or attacked a steaming plateful of fettuccine alfredo made the right way (with only very rich butter and the best parmigiano-reggiano, no cream); or addressed a big, juicy bacon-cheeseburger with homemade fried onion rings and a bottle of Cornas on the side.

Or maybe that person has done all or some of the above and just didn't like the experience. It's possible, I guess. We all have blind spots in our appreciative abilities. Vladimir Nabokov apparently didn't see the point of music. François Truffaut, in so many ways the quintessential Frenchman, considered food a necessary annoyance, and probably would have preferred watching an Ozu movie for the fourteenth time to eating lunch. Me, I wouldn't care if I never saw Cirque du Soleil again in my life.

Ah, but you might point out that, while I may know how good a lot of food tastes, I probably *don't* know how good thin feels. That's not quite true. I've never been thin enough to wear a Speedo or my wife's jeans, but I've lost enough weight on several occasions in my adult life to have experienced the feeling of well-being that comes with comparative physical lightness. I like that feeling. I like being able to wear clothes better, to have more energy, to feel more attractive and faster on my feet.

But those are not the only things I like. The way I figure it, life isn't about weight; it's about balance. Like most of us, I'd love to be not just slimmer but also richer, smarter, happier, and a better human being overall; and I work at all of these, with varying degrees of success. Food helps: My culinary adventures over the years have certainly brought me pleasure, but they've also enriched me in other ways—connected me with wonderful people, taught me much about the world, even made me some money now and then. Food, I might go so far as to say, is one of my paths to self-improvement. If the results show up on the bathroom scale and in my bill at the Big & Tall shop more than I'd like—well, nobody's perfect. I'm trying. Maybe I'll get the equilibrium right one day. Maybe you will, too. ◆

Colman Andrews

Colman Andrews is the restaurant columnist for Gourmet and was the co-founder and editor-in-chief of Saveur.

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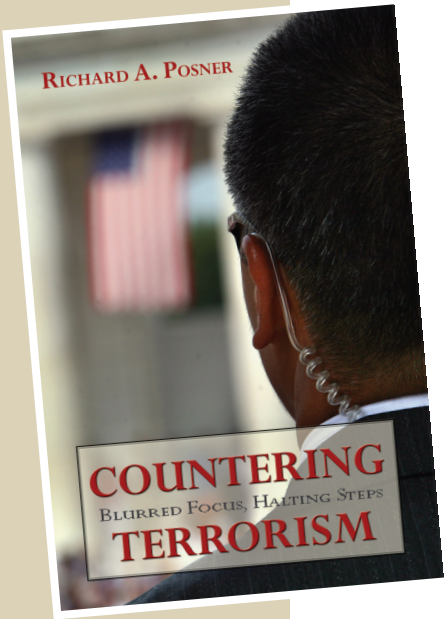

Countering Terrorism

Blurred Focus, Halting Steps

RICHARD A. POSNER

"As Judge Posner's book ably demonstrates, reform of the U.S. intelligence community has a long way to go, notwithstanding the recent Intelligence Reform Act passed into law by the Congress. His analysis of 'three cultures" and the problems of domestic intelligence are especially outstanding."

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Richard A. Posner is a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals in Chicago and a senior lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School. He is the author of hundreds of articles and dozens of books, including *Uncertain Shield: The U.S. Intelligence System in the Throes of Reform* (2006) and *Preventing Surprise Attacks: Intelligence Reform in the Wake of 9/11* (2005).

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